

B. A. Examination, 1896.

CARLYLE'S  
"HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP:"

THE HERO AS POET.

WITH

INTRODUCTION & FULL NOTES

BY

ROBERT STUART SHEPPARD, B. A.,

*Author of "English Lessons for F. A. and B. A. Candidates"*  
*and of Notes on Tennyson's "Princess," Milton's "Lycidas,"*  
*and "Paradise Lost, Book I," &c., &c.*



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CARLYLE'S

## HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP.

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THE HERO AS POET. DANTE ; SHAKSPEARE.

The Hero as Divinity, the Hero as Prophet, are productions of old ages ; not to be repeated in the new. They presuppose a certain rudeness of conception, which the progress of mere scientific knowledge puts an end to. There needs to be, as it were, 5  
a world vacant, or almost vacant, of scientific forms, if men in their loving wonder are to fancy their fellow-man either a god or one speaking with the voice of a god. Divinity and prophet are past. We are now to see our Hero in the less ambitious, 10  
but also less questionable, character of Poet ; a character which does not pass. The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages ; whom all ages possess, when once he is produced, whom the newest age as the oldest may produce ;—and will produce, always 15  
when Nature pleases. Let Nature send a Hero-soul ; in no age is it other than possible that he may be shaped into a Poet.

Hero, Prophet, Poet,—many different names, in different times and places, do we give to Great 20  
Men ; according to varieties we note in them, according to the sphere in which they have displayed themselves ! We might give many more names, on this same principle. I will remark again, however, as a



fact not unimportant to be understood, that the different *sphere* constitutes the grand origin of such distinction ; that the Hero can be Poet, Prophet, King, Priest, or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into. I confess, I have no notion of a truly great man that could not be *all* sorts of men. The Poet who could merely sit on a chair, and compose stanzas, would never make a stanza worth much. He could not sing the Heroic warrior, unless he himself were at least a Heroic warrior too. I fancy there is in him the Politician, the Thinker, Legislator, Philosopher ;—in one or the other degree, he could have been, he is all these. So too I cannot understand how a Mirabeau, with that great glowing heart, with the fire that was in it, with the bursting tears that were in it, could not have written verses, tragedies, poems, and touched all hearts in that way, had his course of life and education led him thitherward. The grand fundamental character is that of Great Man ; that the man be great. Napoleon has words in him which are like Austerlitz Battles. Louis Fourteenth's Marshals are a kind of poetical men withal ; the things Turenne says are full of sagacity and geniality, like sayings of Samuel Johnson. The great heart, the clear deep-seeing eye : there it lies ; no man whatever, in what province soever, can prosper at all without these. Petrarch and Boccaccio did diplomatic messages, it seems, quite well : one can easily believe it ; they had done things a little harder than these ! Burns, a gifted song-writer, might have made a still better Mirabeau. Shakspeare,—one knows not what *he* could not have made, in the supreme degree.



True, there are aptitudes of Nature too. Nature does not make all great men, more than all other men, in the self-same mould. Varieties of aptitude doubtless ; but infinitely more of circumstance ; and far oftenest it is the *latter* only that are looked to. 5 But it is as with common men in the learning of trades. You take any man, as yet a vague capability of a man, who could be any kind of craftsman ; and make him into a smith, a carpenter, a mason : he is then and thenceforth that and nothing else. 10 And if, as Addison complains, you sometimes see a street-porter staggering under his load on spindle-shanks, and near at hand a tailor with the frame of a Samson handling a bit of cloth and small White-chapel needle,—it cannot be considered that apti- 15 tude of Nature alone has been consulted here either ! —The Great Man also, to what shall he be bound apprentice ? Given your Hero, is he to become Conqueror, King, Philosopher, Poet ? It is an inexplicably complex controversial-calculation between 20 the world and him ! He will read the world and its laws ; the world with its laws will be there to be read. What the world, on *this* matter, shall permit and bid is, as we said, the most important fact about the world.— 25

Poet and Prophet differ greatly in our loose modern notions of them. In some old languages, again, the titles are synonymous ; *Vates* means both Prophet and Poet : and indeed at all times, Prophet and Poet well understood, have much kindred of 30 meaning. Fundamentally indeed they are still the same ; in this most important respect especially, That they have penetrated both of them into the sacred mystery of the Universe ; what Goethe calls



‘the open secret.’ “Which is the great secret?” asks one.—“The *open* secret,”—open to all, seen by almost none! That divine mystery, which lies everywhere in all Beings, ‘the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance,’ as Fichte styles it; of which all Appearance, from the starry sky to the grass of the field, but especially the Appearance of Man and his work, is but the *vesture*, the embodiment that renders it visible. This divine mystery *is* in all times and in all places; veritably is. In most times and places it is greatly overlooked; and the Universe, definable always in one or the other dialect, as the realised Thought of God, is considered a trivial, inert, commonplace matter,—as if, says the Satirist, it were a dead thing, which some upholsterer had put together! It could do no good, at present, to *speak* much about this; but it is a pity for every one of us if we do not know it, live ever in the knowledge of it. Really a most mournful pity;—a failure to live at all, if we live otherwise!

But now, I say, whoever may forget this divine mystery, the *Vates*, whether Prophet or Poet, has penetrated into it; is a man sent hither to make it more impressively known to us. That always is his message; he is to reveal that to us,—that sacred mystery which he more than others lives ever present with. While others forget it, he knows it;—I might say, he has been driven to know it; without consent asked of *him*, he finds himself living in it, bound to live in it. Once more, here is no Hearsay, but a direct Insight and Belief; this man too could not help being a sincere man! Whosoever may live in the shows of things, it is for him a necessity of



nature to live in the very fact of things. A man, once more, in earnest with the universe, though all others were but toying with it. He is a *Vates*, first of all, in virtue of being sincere. So far Poet and Prophet, participators in the 'open secret,' are one.

5

With respect to their distinction again: The *Vates* Prophet, we might say, has seized that sacred mystery rather on the moral side, as Good and Evil, Duty and Prohibition; the *Vates* Poet on what the Germans call the æsthetic side, as Beautiful, and the like. The one we may call a revealer of what we are to do, the other of what we are to love. But indeed these two provinces run into one another, and cannot be disjoined. The Prophet too has his eye on what we are to love: how else shall he know what it is we are to do? The highest Voice ever heard on this earth said withal, "Consider the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin: yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." A glance, that, into the deepest deep of Beauty. 'The lilies of the field,'—dressed finer than earthly princes, springing-up there in the humble furrow-field; a beautiful *eye* looking-out on you, from the great inner Sea of Beauty! How could the rude Earth make these, if her Essence, rugged as she looks and is, were not inwardly Beauty? In this point of view, too, a saying of Goethe's, which has staggered several, may have meaning: 'The Beautiful,' he intimates, 'is higher than the Good; the Beautiful includes in it the Good.' The *true* Beautiful; which however, I have said somewhere, 'differs from the *false*, as Heaven does from Vauxhall!' So much for the distinction and identity of Poet and Prophet.—

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In ancient and also in modern periods, we find a



- few Poets who are accounted perfect ; whom it were a kind of treason to find fault with. This is noteworthy ; this is right : yet in strictness it is only an illusion. At bottom, clearly enough, there is no perfect
- 5 Poet ! A vein of Poetry exists in the hearts of all men ; no man is made altogether of Poetry. We are all poets when we *read* a poem well. The ‘imagination that shudders at the Hell of Dante,’ is not that the same faculty, weaker in degree, as Dante’s own?
- 10 No one but Shakspeare can embody, out of *Saxo Grammaticus*, the story of *Hamlet* as Shakspeare did : but every one models some kind of story out of it ; every one embodies it better or worse. We need not spend time in defining. Where there is no
- 15 specific difference, as between round and square, all definition must be more or less arbitrary. A man that has *so* much more of the poetic element developed in him as to have become noticeable, will be called Poet by his neighbours. World-Poets too, those
- 20 whom we are to take for perfect Poets, are settled by critics in the same way. One who rises *so* far above the general level of Poets will, to such and such critics, seem a Universal Poet ; as he ought to do. And yet it is, and must be, an arbitrary distinction.
- 25 All Poets, all men, have some touches of the Universal ; no man is wholly made of that. Most Poets are very soon forgotten : but not the noblest Shakspeare or Homer of them can be remembered *forever* ;—a day comes when he too is not !
- 30 ~~X~~ Nevertheless, you will say, there must be a difference between true Poetry and true Speech not poetical : what is the difference ? On this point many things have been written, especially by late German Critics, some of which are not very intelli-



ble at first. They say, for example, that the Poet has an *infinitude* in him; communicates an *Unendlichkeit*, a certain character of 'infinitude' to whatsoever he delineates. This, though not very precise, yet on so vague a matter is worth remembering: if well meditated, some meaning will gradually be found in it. For my own part, I find considerable meaning in the old vulgar distinction of Poetry being *metrical*, having music in it, being a Song. Truly, if pressed to give a definition, one might say this as soon as anything else: If your delineation be authentically *musical*, musical not in word only, but in heart and substance, in all the thoughts and utterances of it, in the whole conception of it, then it will be poetical; if not, not.—Musical: how much lies in that! A *musical* thought is one spoken by a mind that has penetrated into the inmost heart of the thing; detected the inmost mystery of it, namely the *melody* that lies hidden in it; the inward harmony of coherence which is its soul, whereby it exists, and has a right to be, here in this world. All inmost things, we may say, are melodious; naturally utter themselves in Song. The meaning of Song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect music has on us? A kind of inarticulate unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that!

Nay all speech, even the commonest speech, has something of song in it: not a parish in the world but has its parish-accent;—the rhythm or *tune* to which the people there *sing* what they have to say! Accent is a kind of chanting; all men have accent of their own,—though they only *notice* that of others. Observe too how all passionate



language does of itself become musical,—with a finer music than the mere accent; the speech of a man even in zealous anger becomes a chant, a song. All deep things are Song. It seems somehow the  
5 very central essence of us, Song; as if all the rest were but wrappings and hulls! The primal element of us; of us, and of all things. The Greeks fabled of Sphere-Harmonies: it was the feeling they had of the inner structure of Nature; that the soul of all her  
10 voices and utterances was perfect music. Poetry, therefore, we will call *musical Thought*. The Poet is he who *thinks* in that manner. At bottom, it turns still on power of intellect; it is a man's sincerity and depth of vision that makes him a poet. See  
15 deep enough, and you see musically; the heart of Nature *being* everywhere music, if you can only reach it.

The *Vates* Poet, with his melodious Apocalypse of Nature, seems to hold a poor rank among us, in  
20 comparison with the *Vates* Prophet; his function, and our esteem of him for his function, alike slight. The Hero taken as Divinity; the Hero taken as Prophet; then next the Hero taken only as Poet: does it not look as if our estimate of the Great Man,  
25 epoch after epoch, were continually diminishing? We take him first for a god, then for one god-inspired; and now in the next stage of it, his most miraculous word gains from us only the recognition that he is a Poet, beautiful verse-maker, man of  
30 genius, or such like!—It looks so; but I persuade myself that intrinsically it is not so. If we consider well, it will perhaps appear that in man still there is the *same* altogether peculiar admiration for the Heroic Gift, by what name soever called, that there at any



time was. I should say, if we do not now reckon a Great Man literally divine, it is that our notions of God, of the supreme unattainable Fountain of Splendour, Wisdom and Heroism, are ever rising *higher* ; not altogether that our reverence for these qualities, as manifested in our like, is getting lower. This is worth taking thought of. Sceptical Dilettantism, the curse of these ages, a curse which will not last forever, does indeed in this the highest province of human things, as in all provinces, make sad work ; and our reverence for great men, all crippled, blinded, paralytic as it is, comes out in poor plight, hardly recognisable. Men worship the shows of great men ; the most disbelieve that there is any reality of great men to worship. The dreariest, fatalest faith ; believing which, one would literally despair of human things. Nevertheless look, for example, at Napoleon ! A Corsican lieutenant of artillery ; that is the show of *him* : yet is he not obeyed, *worshipped* after his sort, as all the Tiaraed and Diademed of the world put together could not be ? High Duchesses, and ostlers of inns, gather round the Scottish rustic, Burns ;—a strange feeling dwelling in each that they never heard a man like this ; that, on the whole, this is the man ! In the secret heart of these people it still dimly reveals itself, though there is no accredited way of uttering it at present, that this rustic, with his black brows and flashing sun-eyes, and strange words moving laughter and tears, is of a dignity far beyond all others, incommensurable with all others. Do not we feel it so ? But now, were Dilettantism, Scepticism, Triviality, and all that sorrowful brood, cast-out of us,—as, by God's blessing, they shall one day be ; were faith in the shows



of things entirely swept-out, replaced by clear faith in the *things*, so that a man acted on the impulse of that only, and counted the other non-extant ; what a new livelier feeling towards this Burns were it !

5        Nay here in these ages, such as they are, have we not two mere Poets, if not deified, yet we may say beatified ? Shakspeare and Dante are Saints of Poetry ; really, if we will think of it, *canonised*, so that it is impiety to meddle with them. The unguid-  
10 ed instinct of the world, working across all these perverse impediments, has arrived at such result. Dante and Shakspeare are a peculiar Two. They dwell apart, in a kind of royal solitude ; none equal, none second to them : in the general feeling of the  
15 world, a certain transcendentalism, a glory as of complete perfection, invests these two. They *are* canonised, though no Pope or Cardinals took hand in doing it ! Such, in spite of every perverting influence, in the most unheroic times, is still our inde-  
20 structible reverence for heroism.—We will look a little at these Two, the Poet Dante and the Poet Shakspeare : what little it is permitted us to say here of the Hero as Poet will most fitly arrange itself in that fashion.

25        Many volumes have been written by way of commentary on Dante and his Book ; yet, on the whole, with no great result. His Biography is, as it were, irrecoverably lost for us. An unimportant, wandering, sorrowstricken man, not much note was  
30 taken of him while he lived ; and the most of that has vanished, in the long space that now intervenes. It is five centuries since he ceased writing and living here. After all commentaries, the Book itself is mainly what we know of him. The Book ;—and



one might add that Portrait commonly attributed  
 to Giotto, which, looking on it, you cannot help  
 inclining to think genuine, whoever did it. To me it  
 is a most touching face ; perhaps of all faces that I  
 know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on 5  
 vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it ; the  
 deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which  
 is also deathless ;—significant of the whole history  
 of Dante ! I think it is the mournfullest face that  
 ever was painted from reality ; an altogether tragic ; 10  
 heart-affecting face. There is in it, as foundation  
 of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of  
 a child ; but all this is as if congealed into sharp  
 contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud  
 hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking-out so 15  
 stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprison-  
 ment of thick-ribbed ice ! Withal it is a silent pain  
 too, a silent scornful one : the lip is curled in a kind  
 of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating-out his  
 heart,—as if it were withal a mean insignificant 20  
 thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and  
 strangle were greater than it. The face of one  
 wholly in protest, and lifelong unsundering bat-  
 tle, against the world. Affection all converted  
 into indignation : an implacable indignation ; slow, 25  
 equable, silent, like that of a god ! The eye too,  
 it looks-out as in a kind of *surprise*, a kind of  
 inquiry, Why the world was of such a sort ? This  
 is Dante : so he looks, this ‘voice of ten silent  
 centuries,’ and sings us ‘his mystic unfathomable 30  
 song.’

The little that we know of Dante's Life corres-  
 ponds well enough with this Portrait and this Book.  
 He was born at Florence, in the upper class of



society, in the year 1265. His education was the best then going ; much school-divinity, Aristotelean logic, some Latin classics,—no inconsiderable insight into certain provinces of things : and Dante, with his earnest intelligent nature, we need not doubt, learned better than most all that was learnable. He has a clear cultivated understanding, and of great subtlety ; this best fruit of education he had contrived to realise from these scholastics. He knows accurately and well what lies close to him ; but, in such a time, without printed books or free intercourse, he could not know well what was distant : the small clear light, most luminous for what is near, breaks itself into singular *chiaroscuro* striking on what is far off. This was Dante's learning from the schools. In life, he had gone through the usual destinies ; been twice out campaigning as a soldier for the Florentine State, been on embassy ; had in his thirty-fifth year, by natural gradation of talent and service, become one of the Chief Magistrates of Florence. He had met in boyhood a certain Beatrice Portinari, a beautiful little girl of his own age and rank, and grown-up thenceforth in partial sight of her, in some distant intercourse with her. All readers know his graceful affecting account of this ; and then of their being parted ; of her being wedded to another, and of her death soon after. She makes a great figure in Dante's Poem ; seems to have made a great figure in his life. Of all beings it might seem as if she, held apart from him, far apart at last in the dim Eternity, were the only one he had ever with his whole strength of affection loved. She died : Dante himself was wedded ; but it seems not happily, far from happily. I fancy, the



rigorous earnest man, with his keen excitabilities, was not altogether easy to make happy.

We will not complain of Dante's miseries : had all gone right with him as he wished it, he might have been Prior, Podestà, or whatsoever they call it, of Florence, well accepted among neighbours,—and the world had wanted one of the most notable words ever spoken or sung. Florence would have had another prosperous Lord Mayor ; and the ten dumb centuries continued voiceless, and the ten other listening centuries (for there will be ten of them and more) had no *Divina Commedia* to hear ! We will complain of nothing. A nobler destiny was appointed for this Dante ; and he, struggling like a man led towards death and crucifixion, could not help fulfilling it. Give *him* the choice of his happiness ! He knew not, more than we do, what was really happy, what was really miserable.

In Dante's Priorship, the Guelf-Ghibelline, Bianchi-Neri, or some other confused disturbances rose to such a height, that Dante, whose party had seemed the stronger, was with his friends cast unexpectedly forth into banishment ; doomed thenceforth to a life of woe and wandering. His property was all confiscated and more ; he had the fiercest feeling that it was entirely unjust, nefarious in the sight of God and man. He tried what was in him to get reinstated ; tried even by warlike surprisal, with arms in his hand : but it would not do ; bad only had become worse. There is a record, I believe, still extant in the Florence Archives, dooming this Dante, wheresoever caught, to be burnt alive. Burnt alive ; so it stands, they say : a very curious civic document. Another curious document, some considerable num-



ber of years later, is a Letter of Dante's to the Florentine Magistrates, written in answer to a milder proposal of theirs, that he should return on condition of apologising and paying a fine. He answers, with fixed stern pride : " If I cannot return without calling myself guilty, I will never return, *nunquam revertar.*"

For Dante there was now no home in this world. He wandered from patron to patron, from place to place ; proving, in his own bitter words, ' How hard is the path, *Come è duro calle.*' The wretched are not cheerful company. Dante, poor and banished, with his proud earnest nature, with his moody humours, was not a man to conciliate, men. Petrarch reports of him that being at Candella Scala's court, and blamed one day for his gloom and taciturnity, he answered in no courtier-like way. Della Scala stood among his courtiers, with mimes and buffoons (*nebulones ac histriones*) making him heartily merry ; when turning to Dante, he said : " Is it not strange, now, that this poor fool should make himself so entertaining ; while you, a wise man, sit there day after day, and have nothing to amuse us with at all ? " Dante answered bitterly : " No, not strange ; your Highness is to recollect the Proverb, *Like to Like* ;"—given the amuser, the amusee must also be given ! Such a man, with his proud silent ways, with his sarcasms and sorrows, was not made to succeed at court. By degrees, it came to be evident to him that he had no longer any resting-place, or hope of benefit, in this earth. The earthly world had cast him forth, to wander, to wander ; no living heart to love him now ; for his sore miseries there was no solace here.



The deeper naturally would the Eternal World impress itself on him ; that awful reality over which, after all, this Time-world, with its Florences and banishments, only flutters as an unreal shadow. Florence thou shalt never see : but Hell and Purgatory and Heaven thou shalt surely see ! What is Florence, Can della Scala, and the World and Life altogether ? ETERNITY : thither, of a truth, not elsewhither, art thou and all things bound ! The great soul of Dante, homeless on earth, made its home more and more in that awful other world. Naturally his thoughts brooded on that, as on the one fact important for him. Bodied or bodiless, it is the one fact important for all men :—but to Dante, in that age, it was bodied in fixed certainty of scientific shape ; he no more doubted of that *Malebolge* Pool, that it all lay there with its gloomy circles, with its *alti guai*, and that he himself should see it, than we doubt that we should see Constantinople if we went thither. Dante's heart, long filled with this, brooding over it in speechless thought and awe, bursts-forth at length into ' mystic unfathomable song ; ' and this his *Divine Comedy*, the most remarkable of all modern Books, is the result. It must have been a great solacement to Dante, and was, as we can see, a proud thought for him at times, That he, here in exile, could do this work ; that no Florence, nor no man or men, could hinder him from doing it, or even much help him in doing it. He knew too, partly, that it was great ; the greatest a man could do. ' If thou follow thy star, *Se tu segui tua stella*, '—so could the Hero, in his forsakenness, in his extreme need, still say to himself : " Follow thou thy star, thou shalt not fail of a glorious haven ! " The labour of writing,



we find, and indeed could know otherwise, was great and painful for him ; he says, This Book ‘which has made me lean for many years.’ Ah yes, it was won, all of it, with pain and sore toil,—not in sport, but in grim earnest. His Book, as indeed most good Books are, has been written, in many senses, with his heart’s blood. It is his whole history this Book. He died after finishing it ; not yet very old, at the age of fifty-six ;—broken-hearted rather, as is said.

10 He lies buried in his death-city Ravenna : *Hic claudor Dantes patriis extorris ab oris*. The Florentines begged back his body, in a century after ; the Ravenna people would not give it. “ Here am I Dante laid, shut-out from my native shores.”

15 I said, Dante’s Poem was a Song : it is Tieck who calls it ‘a mystic unfathomable Song’; and such is literally the character of it. Coleridge remarks very pertinently somewhere, that wherever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm

20 and melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning too. For body and soul, word and idea, go strangely together here as everywhere. Song : we said before, it was the Heroic of Speech ! All *old* Poems, Homer’s and the rest, are

25 authentically Songs. I would say, in strictness, that all right Poems are ; that whatsoever is not *sung* is properly no Poem, but a piece of Prose cramped into jingling lines,—to the great injury of the grammar, to the great grief of the reader, for most part !

30 What we want to get at is the *thought* the man had, if he had any : why should he twist it into jingle, if he *could* speak it out plainly ? It is only when the heart of him is rapt into true passion of melody, and the very tones of him, according to Coleridge’s



remark, become musical by the greatness, depth and music of his thoughts, that we can give him right to rhyme and sing ; that we call him a Poet, and listen to him as the Heroic of Speakers,—whose speech is Song. Pretenders to this are many ; and to an earnest reader, I doubt, it is for most part a very melancholy, not to say an insupportable business, that of reading rhyme ! Rhyme that had no inward necessity to be rhymed ;—it ought to have told us plainly, without any jingle, what it was aiming at. I would advise all men who *can* speak their thought, not to sing it ; to understand that, in a serious time, among serious men, there is no vocation in them for singing it. Precisely as we love the true song, and are charmed by it as by something divine, so shall we hate the false song, and account it a mere wooden noise, a thing hollow, superfluous, altogether an insincere and offensive thing.

I give Dante my highest praise when I say of his *Divine Comedy* that it is, in all senses, genuinely a Song. In the very sound of it there is a *canto fermo* ; it proceeds as by a chant. The language, his simple *terza rima*, doubtless helped him in this. One reads along naturally with a sort of *lilt*. But I add, that it could not be otherwise ; for the essence and material of the work are themselves rhythmic. Its depth, and rapt passion and sincerity, makes it musical ;—*go deep* enough, there is music everywhere. A true inward symmetry, what one calls an architectural harmony, reigns in it, proportionates it all : architectural ; which also partakes of the character of music. The three kingdoms, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*, look-out on one another like compartments of a great edifice ; a great supernatural world-cathedral,



piled-up there, stern, solemn, awful ; Dante's  
 World of Souls ! It is, at bottom, the *sincerest* of all  
 Poems ; sincerity, here too, we find to be the mea-  
 sure of worth. It came deep out of the author's heart  
 5 of hearts ; and it goes deep, and through long genera-  
 tions, into ours. The people of Verona, when they  
 saw him on the streets, used to say, "*Eccovi l' uom  
 ch' è stato all' Inferno*, See, there is the man that was  
 in Hell !" Ah, yes, he had been in Hell ;—in Hell  
 10 enough, in long severe sorrow and struggle ; as the  
 like of him is pretty sure to have been. Commedias  
 that come-out *divine* are not accomplished otherwise.  
 Thought, true labour of any kind, highest virtue  
 itself, is it not the daughter of Pain ? Born as out of  
 15 the black whirlwind ;—true *effort*, in fact, as of a  
 captive struggling to free himself : that is Thought.  
 In all ways we are 'to become perfect through *suffer-  
 ing*.'—But, as I say, no work known to me is so  
 elaborated as this of Dante's. It has all been as if  
 20 molten, in the hottest furnace of his soul. It had  
 made him 'lean' for many years. Not the general  
 whole only ; every compartment of it is worked-out,  
 with intense earnestness, into truth, into clear visual-  
 ity. Each answers to the other ; each fits in its place,  
 25 like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It  
 is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the mid-  
 dle ages, rendered forever rhythmically visible there.  
 No light task ; a right intense one : but a task which  
 is *done*.

Perhaps one would say, *intensity*, with the much  
 that depends on it, is the prevailing character of  
 Dante's genius. Dante does not come before us as  
 a large catholic mind ; rather as a narrow, and even  
 sectarian mind : it is partly the fruit of his age and



position, but partly too of his own nature. His greatness has, in all senses, concentrated itself into fiery emphasis and depth. He is world-great not because he is world-wide, but because he is world-deep. Through all objects he pierces as it were done into the heart of Being. I know nothing so intense as Dante. Consider, for example, to begin with the outermost development of his intensity, consider how he paints. He has a great power of vision; seizes the very type of a thing; presents that and nothing more. You remember that first view he gets of the Hall of Dite: *red* pinnacle, red-hot cone of iron glowing through the dim immensity of gloom;—so vivid, so distinct, visible at once and forever! It is as an emblem of the whole genius of Dante. There is a brevity, an abrupt precision in him: Tacitus is not briefer, more condensed; and then in Dante it seems a natural condensation, spontaneous to the man. One smiting word; and then there is silence, nothing more said. His silence is more eloquent than words. It is strange with what a sharp decisive grace he snatches the true likeness of a matter; cuts-into the matter as with a pen of fire. Plutus, the blustering giant, collapses at Virgil's rebuke; it is 'as the sails sink, the mast being suddenly broken.' Or that poor Brunetto Latini, with the *cotto aspetto*, 'face baked,' parched brown and lean; and the 'fiery snow' that falls on them there, a 'fiery snow without wind,' slow, deliberate, never-ending! Or the lids of those Tombs; square sarcophaguses, in that silent dim-burning Hall, each with its Soul in torment; the lids laid open there; they are to be shut at the Day of Judgment, through Eternity. And how Farinata



riser ; and how Cavalcante falls—at hearing of his Son, and the past tense '*fue!*' The very movements in Dante have something brief ; swift, decisive, almost military. It is of the inmost essence of his genius this sort of painting. The fiery, swift Italian nature of the man, so silent, passionate, with its quick abrupt movements, its silent '*pale rages,*' speaks itself in these things.

For though this of painting is one of the outer-  
most developments of a man, it comes like all else from the essential faculty of him ; it is physiognomical of the whole man. Find a man whose words paint you a likeness, you have found a man worth some thing ; mark his manner of doing it, as very characteristic of him. In the first place, he could not have discerned the object at all, or seen the vital type of it, unless he had, what we may call, *sympathised* with it,—had sympathy in him to bestow on objects. He must have been *sincere* about it too ; sincere and sympathetic : a man without worth cannot give you the likeness of any object ; he dwells in vague outwardness, fallacy and trivial hearsay, about all objects. And indeed may we not say that intellect altogether expresses itself in this power of discerning what an object is ? Whatsoever of faculty a man's mind may have will come-out here. Is it even of business, a matter to be done ? The gifted man is he who *sees* the essential point, and leaves all the rest aside as surplusage : it is his faculty too, the man of business's faculty, that he discern the true *likeness*, not the false superficial one, of the thing he has got to work in. And how much of *morality* is in the kind of insight we get of anything ; 'the eye seeing in all things what it brought



with it the faculty of seeing !' To the mean eye all things are trivial, as certainly to the jaundiced they are yellow. Raphael, the Painters tell us, is the best of all Portrait-painters withal. No most gifted eye can exhaust the significance of any object. In the commonest human face there lies more than Raphael will take-away with him. 5

Dante's painting is not graphic only, brief, true, and of a vividness as of fire in dark night ; taken on the wider scale, it is everyway noble, and the outcome of a great soul. Francesca and her Lover, what qualities in that ! A thing woven as out of rainbows, on a ground of eternal black. A small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there, into our very heart of hearts. A touch of womanhood in it too : *della bella persona, che mi fu tolta* ; and how, even in the Pit of woe, it is a solace that *he* will never part from her ! Saddest tragedy in these *alti guai*. And the racking winds, in that *aer bruno*, whirl them away again, to wail forever !—Strange to think : Dante was the friend of this poor Francesca's father ; Francesca herself may have sat upon the Poet's knee, as a bright innocent little child. Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigour of law : it is so Nature is made ; it is so Dante discerned that she was made. What a paltry notion is that of his *Divine Comedy's* being a poor splenetic impotent terrestrial libel ; putting those into Hell whom he could not be avenged upon on earth ! I suppose if ever pity, tender as a mother's, was in the heart of any man, it was in Dante's. But a man who does not know rigour cannot pity either. His very pity will be cowardly, egoistic,—sentimentality, or little better. I know not in the world an affection equal to that of Dante. 10 15 20 25 30



It is a tenderness, a trembling, longing, pitying love : like the wail of Æolian harps, soft, soft ; like a child's young heart ;—and then that stern, sore-saddened heart ! These longings of his towards his  
 5 Beatrice ; their meeting together in the *Paradiso* ; his gazing in her pure transfigured eyes, her that had been purified by death so long, separated from him so far :—one likens it to the song of angels ; it is among the purest utterances of affection, perhaps  
 10 the very purest, that ever came out of a human soul.

For the *intense* Dante is intense in all things ; he has got into the essence of all. His intellectual insight, as painter, on occasion too as reasoner, is but  
 15 the result of all other sorts of intensity. Morally great, above all, we must call him ; it is the beginning of all. His scorn, his grief are as transcendent as his love ;—as indeed, what are they but the *inverse* or *converse* of his love ? ‘ *A Dio spiacenti ed a' nemici sui*, Hateful  
 20 to God and to the enemies of God : lofty scorn, unappeasable silent reprobation and aversion ; ‘ *Non ragionam di lor*, We will not speak of *them*, look only and pass.’ Or think of this ; ‘ They have not the *hope* to die, *Non han speranza di morte*.’ One day,  
 25 it had risen sternly benign on the scathed heart of Dante, that he, wretched, never-resting, worn as he was, would full surely *die* ; ‘ that Destiny itself could not doom him not to die.’ Such words are in this man. For rigour, earnestness and depth, he is not  
 30 to be paralleled in the modern world ; to seek his parallel we must go into the Hebrew Bible, and live with the antique Prophets there.

I do not agree with much modern criticism, in greatly preferring the *Inferno* to the two other parts



of the Divine *Commedia*. Such preference belongs, I imagine, to our general Byronism of taste, and is like to be a transient feeling. The *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, especially the former, one would almost say, is even more excellent than it. It is a noble thing that *Purgatorio*, 'Mountain of Purification;' an emblem of the noblest conception of that age. If Sin is so fatal, and Hell is and must be so rigorous, awful, yet in Repentance too is man purified; Repentance is the grand Christian act. It is beautiful how Dante works it out. The *tremolar dell' onde*, that 'trembling' of the ocean-waves, under the first pure gleam of morning, dawning afar on the wandering Two, is as the type of an altered mood. Hope has now dawned; never-dying Hope, if in company still with heavy sorrow. The obscure sojourn of dæmons and reprobate is underfoot; a soft breathing of penitence mounts higher and higher, to the Throne of Mercy itself. "Pray for me," the denizens of that Mount of Pain all say to him. "Tell my Giovanna to pray for me," my daughter Giovanna; "I think her mother loves me no more!" They toil painfully up by that winding steep, 'bent-down like corbels of a building,' some of them,—crushed-together so 'for the sin of pride'; yet nevertheless in years, in ages and æons, they shall have reached the top, which is Heaven's gate, and by Mercy shall have been admitted in. The joy too of all, when one has prevailed; the whole Mountain shakes with joy, and a psalm of praise rises, when one soul has perfected repentance and got its sin and misery left behind! I call all this a noble embodiment of a true noble thought.

But indeed the Three compartments mutually support one another, are indispensable to one ano-



ther. The *Paradiso*, a kind of inarticulate music to me, is the redeeming side of the *Inferno*; the *Inferno* without it were untrue. All three make-up the true Unseen World, as figured in the Christianity of the Middle Ages; a thing forever memorable, forever true in the essence of it, to all men. It was perhaps delineated in no human soul with such depth of veracity as in this of Dante's; a man *sent* to sing it, to keep it long memorable. Very notable with what brief simplicity he passes out of the every-day reality, into the Invisible one; and in the second or third stanza, we find ourselves in the World of Spirits; and dwell there, as among things palpable, indubitable! To Dante they *were* so; the real world, as it is called, and its facts, was but the threshold to an infinitely higher Fact of a World. At bottom, the one was as *preternatural* as the other. Has not each man a soul? He will not only be a spirit, but is one. To the earnest Dante it is all one visible Fact; he believes it, sees it; is the Poet of it in virtue of that. Sincerity, I say again, is the saving merit, now as always.

Dante's Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, are a symbol withal, an emblematic representation of his Belief about this Universe:—some Critic in a future age, like those Scandinavian ones the other day, who has ceased altogether to think as Dante did, may find this too all an 'Allegory,' perhaps an idle Allegory! It is a sublime embodiment, or sublimest of the soul of Christianity. It expresses, as in huge world-wide architectural emblems, how the Christian Dante felt Good and Evil to be the two polar elements of this Creation, on which it all turns; that these two differ not by *preferability* of one to the other, but by incompatibility



absolute and infinite ; that the one is excellent and high as light and Heaven, the other hideous, black as Gehenna and the Pit of Hell ! Everlasting Justice, yet with Penitence, with everlasting Pity,—all Christianity, as Dante and the Middle Ages had it, is emblemed here. 5  
Emblemed : and yet, as I urged the other day, with what entire truth of purpose ; how unconscious of any embleming ! Hell, Purgatory, Paradise : these things were not fashioned as emblems ; was there, in our Modern European Mind, any 10  
thought at all of their being emblems ! Were they not indubitable awful facts, the whole heart of man taking them for practically true, all Nature everywhere confirming them ? So is it always in these things. Men do not believe in Allegory. The future 15  
Critic, whatever his new thought may be, who considers this of Dante to have been all got-up as an Allegory, will commit one sore mistake !—Paganism we recognised as a veracious expression of the earnest awe-struck feeling of man towards the 20  
Universe ; veracious, true once, and still not without worth for us. But mark here the difference of Paganism and Christianity ; one great difference. Paganism emblemed chiefly the Operations of Nature ; the destinies, efforts, combinations, vicissitudes of things and men in this world ; Chris- 25  
tianism emblemed the Law of Human Duty, the Moral Law of Man. One was for the sensuous nature : a rude helpless utterance of the *first* Thought of men,—the chief recognised virtue, Courage, 30  
Superiority to Fear. The other was not for the sensuous nature, but for the moral. What a progress is here, if in that one respect only !—

And so in this Dante, as we said, had ten silent



centuries, in a very strange way, found a voice. The *Divina Commedia* is of Dante's writing ; yet in truth *it* belongs to ten Christian centuries, only the finishing of it is Dante's. So always. The crafts-

5 man there, the smith with that metal of his, with these tools, with these cunning methods,—how little of all he does is properly *his* work ! All past inventive men work there with him ;—as indeed with all of us, in all things. Dante is the spokesman of

10 the Middle Ages ; the Thought they lived by stands here, in everlasting music. These sublime ideas of his, terrible and beautiful, are the fruit of the Christian Meditation of all the good men who had gone before him. Precious they ; but also is not he pre-

15 cious ? Much, had not he spoken, would have been dumb ; not dead, yet living voiceless.

On the whole, is it not an utterance, this mystic Song, at once of one of the greatest human souls, and of the highest thing that Europe had hitherto

20 realised for itself ? Christianity, as Dante sings it, is another than Paganism in the rude Norse mind ; another than ' Bastard Christianity ' half-articulate-ly spoken in the Arab Desert, seven-hundred years before !—The noblest *idea* made *real* hitherto among

25 men, is sung, and emblemed-forth abidingly, by one of the noblest men. In the one sense and in the other, are we not right glad to possess it ? As I calculate, it may last yet for long thousands of years. For the thing that is uttered from the inmost parts

30 of a man's soul, differs altogether from what is uttered by the outer part. The outer is of the day, under the empire of mode ; the outer passes away, in swift endless changes ; the inmost is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. True



souls, in all generations of the world, who look  
 on this Dante, will find a brotherhood in him ; the  
 deep sincerity of his thoughts, his woes and hopes,  
 will speak likewise to their sincerity ; they will feel  
 that this Dante too was a brother. Napoleon in 5  
 Saint-Helena is charmed with the genial veracity of  
 old Homer. The oldest Hebrew Prophet, under a  
 vesture the most diverse from ours, does yet, be-  
 cause he speaks from the heart of man, speak to all  
 men's hearts. It is the one sole secret of continu- 10  
 ing long memorable. Dante, for depth of sincerity,  
 is like an antique Prophet too ; his words, like  
 theirs, come from his very heart. One need not  
 wonder if it were predicted that his Poem might be  
 the most enduring thing our Europe has yet made ; 15  
 for nothing so endures as a truly spoken word.  
 All cathedrals, pontificalities, brass and stone, and  
 outer arrangement never so lasting, are brief in  
 comparison to an unfathomable heart-song like this :  
 one feels as if it might survive, still of importance 20  
 to men, when these had all sunk into new irrecog-  
 nisable combinations, and had ceased individually  
 to be. Europe has made much ; great cities, great  
 empires, encyclopædias, creeds, bodies of opinion  
 and practice : but it has made little of the class of 25  
 Dante's Thought. Homer yet *is*, veritably present  
 face to face with every open soul of us ; and Greece,  
 where is *it*? Desolate for thousands of years ;  
 away, vanished ; a bewildered heap of stones and  
 rubbish, the life and existence of it all gone. Like 30  
 a dream ; like the dust of King Agamemnon ! Greece  
 was ; Greece, except in the words it spoke, is not.

The uses of this Dante? We will not say much  
 about his 'uses.' A human soul who has once got



into that primal element of *Song*, and sung-forth fitly somewhat therefrom, has worked in the *depths* of our existence ; feeding through long times the life-*roots* of all excellent human things whatsoever,—in  
5 a way that ‘utilities’ will not succeed well in calculating ! We will not estimate the Sun by the quantity of gas-light it saves ; Dante shall be invaluable, or of no value. One remark I may make : the contrast in this respect between the Hero-Poet and the  
10 Hero-Prophet. In a hundred years, Mahomet, as we saw, had his Arabians at Grenada and at Delhi ; Dante’s Italians seem to be yet very much where they were. Shall we say, then, Dante’s effect on the world was small in comparison ? Not so : his  
15 arena is far more restricted ; but also it is far nobler, clearer ;—perhaps not less but more important. Mahomet speaks to great masses of men, in the coarse dialect adapted to such ; a dialect filled with inconsistencies, crudities, follies : on the great  
20 masses alone can he act, and there with good and with evil strangely blended. Dante speaks to the noble, the pure and great, in all times and places. Neither does he grow obsolete, as the other does. Dante burns as a pure star, fixed there in the  
25 firmament, at which the great and the high of all ages kindle themselves : he is the possession of all the chosen of the world for uncounted time. Dante, one calculates, may long survive Mahomet. In this way the balance may be made straight again.

30 But, at any rate, it is not by what is called their effect on the world, by what *we* can judge of their effect there, that a man and his work are measured. Effect ? Influence ? Utility ? Let a man *do* his work ; the fruit of it is the care of Another than



he. It will grow its own fruit ; and whether embodied in Caliph Thrones and Arabian Conquests, so that it 'fills all Morning and Evening Newspapers,' and all Histories, which are a kind of distilled Newspapers ; or not embodied so at all ;—what matters that? That is not the real fruit of it ! The Arabian Caliph, in so far only as he did something, was something. If the great Cause of Man, and Man's work in God's Earth, got no furtherance from the Arabian Caliph, then no matter how many scimetars he drew, how many gold piasters pocketed, and what uproar and blaring he made in this world,—*he* was but a loud-sounding inanity and futility ; at bottom, he *was* not at all. Let us honour the great empire of *Silence*, once more ! The boundless treasury which we do *not* jingle in our pockets, or count-up and present before men ! It is perhaps, of all things, the usefullest for each of us to do, in these loud times.— —

As Dante, the Italian man, was sent into our world to embody musically the Religion of the Middle Ages, the Religion of our Modern Europe, its Inner Life ; so Shakspeare, we may say, embodies for us the Outer Life of our Europe as developed then, its chivalries, courtesies, humours, ambitions, what practical way of thinking, acting, looking at the world, men then had. As in Homer we may still construe Old Greece ; so in Shakspeare and Dante, after thousands of years, what our modern Europe was, in Faith and in Practice, will still be legible. Dante has given us the Faith or soul ; Shakspeare, in a not less noble way, has given us the Practice or body. This latter also we were to have ; a man was sent for it, the man Shakspeare. Just when that



chivalry way of life had reached its last finish, and was on the point of breaking down into slow or swift dissolution, as we now see it everywhere, this other sovereign Poet, with his seeing eye, with his perennial singing voice, was sent to take note of it, to give long-enduring record of it. Two fit men: Dante, deep, fierce as the central fire of the world; Shakspeare, wide, placid, far-seeing, as the Sun, the upper light of the world. Italy produced the one world-voice; we English had the honour of producing the other.

Curious enough how, as it were by mere accident, this man came to us. I think always, so great, quiet, complete and self-sufficing is this Shakspeare, had the Warwickshire Squire not prosecuted him for deer-stealing, we had perhaps never heard of him as a Poet! The woods and skies, the rustic Life of Man in Stratford there, had been enough for this man! But indeed that strange outbudding of our whole English Existence, which we call the Elizabethan Era, did not it too come as of its own accord? The 'Tree Igdrasil' buds and withers by its own laws,—too deep for our scanning. Yet it does bud and wither, and every bough and leaf of it is there, by fixed eternal laws; not a Sir Thomas Lucy but comes at the hour fit for him. Curious, I say, and not sufficiently considered: how everything does coöperate with all; not a leaf rotting on the highway but is indissoluble portion of solar and stellar systems; no thought, word or act of man but has sprung withal out of all men, and works sooner or later, recognisably or irrecongnisably, on all men! It is all a Tree: circulation of sap and influences, mutual communication of every minutest leaf with the lowest



talon of a root, with every other greatest and min-  
 fest portion of the whole. The Tree Igdrasil, that  
 has its roots down in the Kingdoms of Hela and  
 Death, and whose boughs overspread the highest  
 Heaven!—

5

In some sense it may be said that this glorious  
 Elizabethan Era with its Shakspeare, as the outcome  
 and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself  
 attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages.  
 The Christian Faith, which was the theme of 10  
 Dante's Song, had produced this Practical Life which  
 Shakspeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it  
 now and always is, was the soul of Practice; the  
 primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here,  
 as rather curious, that Middle-Age Catholicism was 15  
 abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish  
 it, before Shakspeare, the noblest product of it,  
 made his appearance. He did make his appearance  
 nevertheless. Nature at her own time, with Catho-  
 licism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth; 20  
 taking small thought of Acts of Parliament. King-  
 Henrys, Queen-Elizabeths go their way; and Nature  
 too goes hers. Acts of Parliament, on the whole, are  
 small, notwithstanding the noise they make. What  
 Act of Parliament, debate at St. Stephens, on the 25  
 hustings or elsewhere, was it that brought this  
 Shakspeare into being? No dining at Freemasons'  
 Tavern, opening subscription lists, selling of shares,  
 and infinite other jangling and true or false endea-  
 vouring! This Elizabethan Era, and all its noble- 30  
 ness and blessedness, came without proclamation,  
 preparation of ours. Priceless Shakspeare was  
 the free gift of Nature; given altogether silently;—  
 received altogether silently, as if it had been a



thing of little account. And yet, very literally, it is a priceless thing. One should look at that side of matters too.

Of this Shakspeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one ; I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakspeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto ; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. Such a calmness of depth ; placid joyous strength ; all things imaged in that great soul of his so true and clear, as in a tranquil unfathomable sea ! It has been said, that in the constructing of Shakspeare's Dramas there is, apart from all other ' faculties ' as they are called, an understanding manifested, equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum*. That is true ; and it is not a truth that strikes every one. It would become more apparent if we tried, any of us for himself, how, out of Shakspeare's dramatic materials, *we* could fashion such a result ! The built house seems all so fit,—every-way as it should be, as if it came there by its own law and the nature of things,—we forget the rude disorderly quarry it was shaped from. The very perfection of the house, as if Nature herself had made it, hides the builder's merit. Perfect, more perfect than any other man, we may call Shakspeare in this : he discerns, knows as by instinct, what condition he works under, what his materials are, what his own force and its relation to them is. It is not a transi-



tory glance of insight that will suffice ; it is deliberate illumination of the whole matter ; it is a calmly *seeing* eye ; a great intellect, in short. How a man, of some wide thing that he has witnessed, will construct a narrative, what kind of picture and delineation he will give of it,—is the best measure you could get of what intellect is in the man. Which circumstance is vital and shall stand prominent ; which unessential, fit to be suppressed ; where is the true *beginning*, the true sequence and ending ? To find out this, you task the whole force of insight that is in the man. He must *understand* the thing ; according to the depth of his understanding, will the fitness of his answer be. You will try him so. Does like join itself to like ; does the spirit of method stir in that confusion, so that its embroilment becomes order ? Can the man say, *Fiat lux*, Let there be light ; and out of chaos make a world ? Precisely as there is *light* in himself, will he accomplish this.

Or indeed we may say again, it is in what I called Portrait-painting, delineating of men and things, especially of men, that Shakspeare is great. All the greatness of the man comes out decisively here. It is unexampled, I think, that calm creative perspicacity of Shakspeare. The thing he looks at reveals not this or that face of it, but its inmost heart, and generic secret : it dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it. Creative, we said : poetic creation, what is this too but *seeing* the thing sufficiently ? The word that will describe the thing, follows of itself from such clear intense sight of the thing. And is not Shakspeare's *morality*, his valour, candour, tolerance, truthfulness ; his whole victorious strength



and greatness, which can triumph-over such obstructions, visible there too? Great as the world! No *twisted*, poor convex-concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a  
 5 perfectly *level* mirror;—that is to say withal, if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man. It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes-in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus;  
 10 sets them all forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all. *Novum Organum*, and all the intellect you will find in Bacon, is of a quite secondary order; earthly, material, poor in comparison with this. Among modern men,  
 15 one finds, in strictness, almost nothing of the same rank. Goethe alone, since the days of Shakspeare, reminds me of it. Of him too you say that he *saw* the object; you may say what he himself says of Shakspeare: ‘His characters are like watches with  
 20 ‘dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you ‘the hour like others, and the inward mechanism ‘also is all visible.’

The seeing eye! It is this that discloses the inner harmony of things; what Nature meant, what  
 25 musical idea Nature has wrapped-up in these often rough embodiments. Something she did mean. To the seeing eye that something were discernible. Are they base, miserable things? You can laugh over them, you can weep over them; you can in some  
 30 way or other genially relate yourself to them;—you can, at lowest, hold your peace about them, turn away your own and others’ face from them, till the hour come for practically exterminating and extinguishing them! At bottom, it is the Poet’s first gift,



as it is all men's, that he have intellect enough. He will be a Poet if he have : a Poet in word ; or failing that, perhaps still better, a Poet in act. Whether he write at all ; and if so, whether in prose or in verse, will depend on accidents : who knows on what extremely trivial accidents,—perhaps on his having had a singing-master, on his being taught to sing in his boyhood ! But the faculty which enables him to discern the inner heart of things, and the harmony that dwells there (for whatsoever exists has a harmony in the heart of it, or it would not hold together and exist), is not the result of habits or accidents, but the gift of Nature herself ; the primary outfit for a Heroic man in what sort soever. To the Poet, as to every other, we say first of all, *See*. If you cannot do that, it is of no use to keep stringing rhymes together, jingling sensibilities against each other, and *name* yourself a Poet; there is no hope for you. If you can, there is, in prose or verse, in action or speculation, all manner of hope. The crabbed old Schoolmaster used to ask, when they brought him a new pupil, “ But are ye sure he's *not a dunce?*” Why, really one might ask the same thing, in regard to every man proposed for whatsoever function ; and consider it as the one enquiry needful : Are ye sure he's not a dunce ? There is, in this world, no other entirely fatal person.

For, in fact, I say the degree of vision that dwells in a man is a correct measure of the man. If called to define Shakspeare's faculty, I should say superiority of intellect, and think I had included all under that. What indeed are faculties ? We talk of faculties as if they were distinct, things separable ; as if a man had intellect, imagination, fancy, &c.,



as he has hands, feet and arms. That is a capital error. Then again, we hear of a man's 'intellectual nature,' and of his 'moral nature,' as if these again were divisible, and existed apart. Necessities of  
5 language do perhaps prescribe such forms of utterance ; we must speak, I am aware, in that way, if we are to speak at all. But words ought not to harden into things for us. It seems to me, our apprehension of this matter is, for most part, radically  
10 falsified thereby. We ought to know withal, and to keep forever in mind, that these divisions are at bottom but *names* ; that man's spiritual nature, the vital Force which dwells in him, is essentially one and indivisible ; that what we call imagination,  
15 fancy, understanding, and so forth, are but different figures of the same Power of Insight, all indissolubly connected with each other, physiognomically related, that if we knew one of them, we might know all of them. Morality itself, what we call the moral quality  
20 of a man, what is this but another *side* of the one vital Force whereby he is and works ? All that a man does is physiognomical of him. You may see how a man would fight, by the way in which he sings ; his courage, or want of courage, is visible in the word he  
25 utters, in the opinion he has formed, no less than in the stroke he strikes. He is *one* ; and preaches the same Self abroad in all these ways.

Without hands a man might have feet, and could still walk : but, consider it,—without morality,  
30 intellect were impossible for him ; a thoroughly immoral *man* he could not know anything at all ! To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathise with it : that is, be *virtuously* related to it. If he have not



the justice to put down his own selfishness at every turn, the courage to stand by the dangerous-true at every turn, how shall he know? His virtues, all of them, will lie recorded in his knowledge. Nature, with her truth, remains to the bad, to the selfish and the pusillanimous, forever a sealed book: what such can know of Nature is mean, superficial, small; for the uses of the day merely.—But does not the very Fox know something of Nature? Exactly so: it knows where the geese lodge! The human Reynard, very frequent everywhere in the world, what more does he know but this and the like of this? Nay, it should be considered too, that if the Fox had not a certain vulpine *morality*, he could not even know where the geese were, or get at the geese! If he spent his time in splenetic atrabiliar reflections on his own misery, his ill usage by Nature, Fortune and other Foxes, and so forth; and had not courage, promptitude, practicality, and other suitable vulpine gifts and graces, he would catch no geese. We may say of the Fox too, that his morality and insight are of the same dimensions; different faces of the same internal unity of vulpine life!—These things are worth stating; for the contrary of them acts with manifold very baleful perversion, in this time: what limitations, modifications they require, your own candour will supply.

If I say, therefore, that Shakspeare is the greatest of Intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakspeare's intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect; there is more virtue in it than he himself is aware of. Novalis beautifully remarks of him, that these Dramas of his are Products of Nature too,



deep as Nature herself. I find a great truth in this  
 saying. Shakspeare's Art is not Artifice ; the noblest  
 worth of it is not there by plan or precontrivance.  
 It grows-up from the deeps of Nature, through this  
 5 noble sincere soul, who is a voice of Nature. The  
 latest generations of men will find new meanings in  
 Shakspeare, new elucidations of their own human  
 being ; ' new harmonies with the infinite structure of  
 ' the Universe ; concurrences with later ideas, affi-  
 10 ' nities with the higher powers and senses of man.'  
 This well deserves meditating. It is Nature's high-  
 est reward to a true simple great soul, that he get  
 thus to be *a part of herself*. Such a man's works,  
 whatsoever he with utmost conscious exertion and  
 15 forethought shall accomplish, grow up withal *un-*  
*consciously*, from the unknown deeps in him ;—as the  
 oak-tree grows from the Earth's bosom, as the moun-  
 tains and waters shape themselves ; with a symmetry  
 grounded on Nature's own laws, conformable to all  
 20 Truth whatsoever. How much in Shakspeare lies  
 hid ; his sorrows, his silent struggles known to  
 himself ; much that was not known at all, not  
 speakable at all : like *roots*, like sap and forces  
 working underground ! Speech is great ; but Silence  
 25 is greater.

Withal the joyful tranquillity of this man is  
 notable. I will not blame Dante for his misery : it  
 is as battle without victory ; but true battle,—the first,  
 indispensable thing. Yet I call Shakspeare greater  
 30 than Dante, in that he fought truly, and did conquer.  
 Doubt it not, he had his own sorrows : those *Sonnets*  
 of his will even testify expressly in what deep waters  
 he had waded, and swum struggling for his life ;—as  
 what man like him ever failed to have to do ? It



seems to me a heedless notion, our common one,  
 that he sat like a bird on the bough ; and sang forth,  
 free and offhand, never knowing the troubles of  
 other men. Not so ; with no man is it so. How  
 could a man travel forward from rustic deer-poaching 5  
 to such tragedy-writing, and not fall-in with sorrows  
 by the way ? Or, still better, how could a man deli-  
 neate a Hamlet, a Coriolanus, a Macbeth, so many  
 suffering heroic hearts, if his own heroic heart had  
 never suffered ?—And now, in contrast with all this, 10  
 observe his mirthfulness, his genuine overflowing  
 love of laughter ! You would say, in no point does he  
*exaggerate* but only in laughter. Fiery objurgations,  
 words that pierce and burn, are to be found in Shaks-  
 peare ; yet he is always in measure here ; never what 15  
 Johnson would remark as a specially ‘ good-hater.’  
 But his laughter seems to pour from him in floods ;  
 he heaps all manner of ridiculous nicknames on the  
 butt he is bantering, tumbles and tosses him in all  
 sorts of horse-play ; you would say, roars and 20  
 laughs. And then, if not always the finest, it is  
 always a genial laughter. Not at mere weakness, at  
 misery or poverty ; never. No man who *can* laugh,  
 what we call laughing, will laugh at these things. It  
 is some poor character only *desiring* to laugh, and have 25  
 the credit of wit, that does so. Laughter means  
 sympathy ; good laughter is not ‘ the crackling of  
 thorns under the pot.’ Even at stupidity and pre-  
 tension this Shakspeare does not laugh otherwise  
 than genially. Dogberry and Verges tickle our very 30  
 hearts ; and we dismiss them covered with explo-  
 sions of laughter : but we like the poor fellows only  
 the better for our laughing ; and hope they will get  
 on well there, and continue Presidents of the City-



watch.—Such laughter, like sunshine on the deep sea, is very beautiful to me.

We have no room to speak of Shakspeare's individual works ; though perhaps there is much  
5 still waiting to be said on that head. Had we, for instance, all his plays reviewed as *Hamlet*, in *Wilhelm Meister*, is ! A thing which might, one day, be done. August Wilhelm Schlegel has a remark on his Historical Plays, *Henry Fifth* and the others,  
10 which is worth remembering. He calls them a kind of National Epic. Marlborough, you recollect, said, he knew no English History but what he had learned from Shakspeare. There are really, if we look to it, few as memorable Histories. The great salient points are admirably seized ; all rounds itself off,  
15 into a kind of rhythmic coherence ; it is, as Schlegel says, *epic* ;—as indeed all delineation by a great thinker will be. There are right beautiful things in those Pieces, which indeed together form one beautiful thing. That battle of Agincourt strikes me as  
20 one of the most perfect things, in its sort, we anywhere have of Shakspeare's. The description of the two hosts : the worn-out, jaded English ; the dread hour, big with destiny, when the battle shall begin ; and then that deathless valour : “ Ye good  
25 yeomen, whose limbs were made in England ! ” There is a noble Patriotism in it,—far other than the ‘indifference’ you sometimes hear ascribed to Shakspeare. A true English heart breathes, calm and  
30 strong, through the whole business ; not boisterous, protrusive ; all the better for that. There is a sound in it like the ring of steel. This man too had a right stroke in him, had it come to that !

But I will say, of Shakspeare's works generally,



that we have no full impress of him there ; even  
 as full as we have of many men. His works are so  
 many windows, through which we see a glimpse of  
 the world that was in him. All his works seem,  
 comparatively speaking, cursory, imperfect, written 5  
 under cramping circumstances ; giving only here  
 and there a note of the full utterance of the man.  
 Passages there are that come upon you like splen-  
 dour out of Heaven ; bursts of radiance, illuminating  
 the very heart of the thing : you say, " That is *true*, 10  
 spoken once and forever ; wheresoever and when-  
 soever there is an open human soul, that will be  
 recognised as true ! " Such bursts, however, make  
 us feel that the surrounding matter is not radiant ;  
 that it is, in part, temporary, conventional. Alas, 15  
 Shakspeare had to write for the Globe Playhouse : his  
 great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that  
 and no other mould. It was with him, then, as it is  
 with us all. No man works save under conditions.  
 The sculptor cannot set his own free Thought before 20  
 us ; but his Thought as he could translate it into the  
 stone that was given, with the tools that were given.  
*Disjecta membra* are all that we find of any Poet, or  
 of any man.

Whoever looks intelligently at this Shakspeare 25  
 may recognise that he too was a *Prophet*, in his  
 way ; of an insight, analogous to the Prophetic,  
 though he took it up in another strain. Nature seem-  
 ed to this man also divine ; *unspeakable*, deep as  
 Tophet, high as Heaven : ' We are such stuff as 30  
 Dreams are made of ! ' That scroll in Westminster  
 Abbey, which few read with understanding, is of  
 the depth of any seer. But the man sang ; did not  
 preach, except musically. We called Dante the



melodious Priest of Middle-Age Catholicism. May we not call Shakspeare the still more melodious Priest of a *true* Catholicism, the 'Universal Church' of the Future and of all times? No narrow superstition, harsh asceticism, intolerance, fanatical fierceness or perversion : a Revelation, so far as it goes, that such a thousandfold hidden beauty and divineness dwells in all Nature ; which let all men worship as they can ! We may say without offence, that there rises a kind of universal Psalm out of this Shakspeare too ; not unfit to make itself heard among the still more sacred Psalms. Not in disharmony with these, if we understood them, but in harmony !—I cannot call this Shakspeare a 'Sceptic,' as some do ; his indifference to the creeds and theological quarrels of his time misleading them. No : neither unpatriotic, though he says little about his Patriotism ; nor sceptic, though he says little about his Faith. Such 'indifference' was the fruit of his greatness withal : his whole heart was in his own grand sphere of worship (we may call it such) ; these other controversies, vitally important to other men, were not vital to him.

But call it worship, call it what you will, is it not a right glorious thing, and set of things, this that Shakspeare has brought us ? For myself, I feel that there is actually a kind of sacredness in the fact of such a man being sent into this Earth. Is he not an eye to us all ; a blessed heaven-sent Bringer of Light ?—And, at bottom, was it not perhaps far better that this Shakspeare, everyway an unconscious man, was *conscious* of no Heavenly message ? He did not feel, like Mahomet, because he saw into those internal Splendours, that he specially was the



'Prophet of God : ' and was he not greater than  
 Mahomet in that ? Greater ; and also, if we compute  
 strictly, as we did in Dante's case, more successful.  
 It was intrinsically an error that notion of Maho-  
 met's, of his supreme Prophethood ; and has come 5  
 down to us inextricably involved in error to this  
 day ; dragging along with it such a coil of fables,  
 impurities, intolerances, as makes it a questionable  
 step for me here and now to say, as I have done,  
 that Mahomet was a true Speaker at all, and not 10  
 rather an ambitious charlatan, perversity and simu-  
 lacrum, no Speaker, but a Babblers ! Even in Arabia,  
 as I compute, Mahomet will have exhausted himself  
 and become obsolete, while this Shakspeare, this  
 Dante may still be young ;—while this Shakspeare 15  
 may pretend to be a Priest of Mankind, of Arabia as  
 of other places, for unlimited periods to come ! Com-  
 pared with any speaker or singer one knows, even  
 with Æschylus or Homer, why should he not, for  
 veracity and universality, last like them ? He is *sincere* 20  
 as they ; reaches deep down like them, to the univer-  
 sal and perennial. But as for Mahomet, I think it  
 had been better for him *not* to be so conscious ! Alas,  
 poor Mahomet ; all that he was *conscious* of was a  
 mere error ; a futility and triviality,—as indeed such 25  
 ever is. The truly great in him too was the uncon-  
 scious : that he was a wild Arab lion of the desert,  
 and did speak-out with that great thunder-voice of  
 his, not by words which he *thought* to be great, but  
 by actions, by feelings, by a history which *were* 30  
 great ! His Koran has become a stupid piece of pro-  
 lix absurdity ; we do not believe, like him, that God  
 wrote that ! The Great Man here too, as always, is a



Force of Nature : whatsoever is truly great in him springs-up from the *inarticulate* deeps.

Well : this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant, who rose to be Manager of a Playhouse, so that he  
5 could live without begging ; whom the Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on ; whom Sir Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the Treadmill ! We did not account him a god, like Odin, while he dwelt with us ;—on which point  
10 there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat : In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakspeare has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of English-  
15 men, would we not give-up rather than the Stratford Peasant ? There is no regiment of highest Dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honour among foreign nations, as an ornament to our Eng-  
20 lish Household, what item is there that we would not surrender rather than him ? Consider now, if they asked us, Will you give-up your Indian Empire or your Shakspeare, you English ; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shaks-  
25 peare ? Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language ; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer : Indian Empire, or no Indian Empire ; we cannot do without Shakspeare ! Indian Empire  
30 will go, at any rate, some day ; but this Shakspeare does not go, he lasts forever with us ; we cannot give-up our Shakspeare !

Nay, apart from spiritualities ; and considering him merely as a real, marketable, tangibly-useful



possession. England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English : in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall-out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish : what is it that will accomplish this? Acts of Parliament, administrative Prime-Ministers, cannot, America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it : Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or Combination of Parliaments, can dethrone ! This King Shakspeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs ; *indestructible* ; really more valuable in that point of view, than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another : “ Yes, this Shakspeare is ours ; we produced him, we speak and think by him ; we are of one blood and kind with him.” The most common-sense politician, too, if he pleases, may think of that.

Yes, truly, it is a great thing for a Nation that it get an articulate voice ; that it produce a man



who will speak-forth melodiously what the heart of it means ! Italy, for example, poor Italy lies dis-membered, scattered asunder, not appearing in any protocol or treaty as a unity at all ; yet the noble  
5 Italy is actually *one* : Italy produced its Dante ; Italy can speak ! The Czar of All the Russias, he is strong, with so many bayonets, Cossacks and cannons ; and does a great feat in keeping such a tract of Earth politically together ; but he cannot yet speak. Some-  
10 thing great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius, to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb monster hitherto. His cannons and Cossacks will all have rusted into nonentity, while that Dante's  
15 voice is still audible. The Nation that has a Dante is bound together as no dumb Russia can be.—We must here end what we had to say of the *Hero-Poet*.





NOTES  
ON  
CARLYLE'S  
HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP:  
THE HERO AS POET.

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INTRODUCTION.

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**I. Biographical Notice of Carlyle.**

1. The writings of Mr. Carlyle are so various that he may be characterised as historian, biographer, translator, moralist, or satirist. His greatest and most splendid successes, however, have been won in the departments of biography and history. The chief interest and charm of his works consist in the individual portraits they contain and the strong personal sympathies or antipathies they describe. He has a clear and penetrating insight into human nature; he notes every fact and circumstance that can elucidate character, and having selected his subject, he works with passionate earnestness till he reproduces the individual or scene before the reader, exact in outline according to his preconceived notion, and with marvellous force and vividness of colouring. Even as a landscape-painter—a character he by no means affects—Mr. Carlyle has rarely been surpassed. A Scotch shipping town, an English fen, a wild mountain solitude, or a Welsh valley, is depicted by him in a few words with the distinctness and reality of a photograph.

2. Thomas Carlyle was born on December 4, 1795, in the village of Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire. His death occurred at Chelsea on February 5, 1881, and he was buried beside his forefathers, in his native village. His father, a farmer, is spoken of as a man of great moral worth and sagacity; his mother as affectionate, pious, and more than ordinarily in-



telligent; and thus, accepting his own theory that "the history of a man's childhood is the description of his parents and environment," Mr. Carlyle entered upon "the mystery of life" under happy and enviable circumstances. As a school-boy, he became acquainted with Edward Irving, the once celebrated preacher, whom he has commemorated as a man of the noblest nature. From the grammar-school of Annan, Carlyle went to Edinburgh, and studied at the university for the church, but before he had completed his academical course, his views changed. He had excelled in mathematics; and afterwards, for about four years, he was a teacher of mathematics—first in Annan, and afterwards in Kirkcaldy, Fifeshire, where Edward Irving also resided as a teacher. In 1818 he proceeded to Edinburgh, where he had the range of the University Library, and where he wrote a number of short biographies and other articles for the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, conducted by Brewster. In 1822 he became tutor to Mr. Charles Buller, whose honourable public career was prematurely terminated by his death, in his forty-second year, in 1848. "His light airy brilliancy," said Carlyle, "has suddenly become solemn, fixed in the earnest stillness of eternity."

3. Mr. Carlyle in 1823 contributed to the *London Magazine* in monthly portions his *Life of Schiller*, which he enlarged and published in a separate form in 1825. He was also engaged in translating Legendre's *Geometry*, to which he prefixed an essay on Proportion; and in the same busy year (1824) he translated the *Wilhelm Meister* of Goethe. Mr. Carlyle's translation appeared without his name. Its merits were too palpable to be overlooked, though some critics objected to the strong infusion of German phraseology which the translator had imported into his English version. This never left Mr. Carlyle even in his original works; but the *Life of Schiller* has none of the peculiarity.....

4. In 1826, marriage lessened the anxieties attendant on a literary life, while it added permanently to Mr. Carlyle's happiness. The lady to whom he was united was a lineal descendant of John Knox—Miss Jane Welsh, daughter of Dr. Welsh, Haddington. Mrs. Carlyle had a small property, Craigenputtoch, in Dumfriesshire, to which, after about two years' residence in Edinburgh, the lady and her husband retired.....

5. In this country residence Mr. Carlyle wrote papers for the *Foreign Review*, and his *Sartor Resartus*, which, after being rejected by several publishers, appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833-34. The book might well have puzzled the



“book-tasters” who decide for publishers on works submitted to them in manuscript. *Sartor* professes to be a review of a German treatise on dress, and the hero, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, is made to illustrate by his life and character the transcendental philosophy of Fichte, adopted by Mr. Carlyle, which is thus explained: “That all things which we see or work with in this earth, especially we ourselves and all persons, are as a kind of vesture or sensuous appearance: that under all these lies, as the essence of them, what he calls the “Divine Idea of the World;” this is the reality which lies at the bottom of all appearance. To the mass of men no such divine idea is recognisable in the world; they live merely, says Fichte, among the superficialities, practicalities, and shows of the world, not dreaming that there is anything divine under them.”—(*Hero Worship*.) Mr. Carlyle works out this theory—the clothes-philosophy—and finds the world false and hollow, our institutions mere worn-out rags or disguises, and that our only safety lies in flying from falsehood to truth, and becoming in harmony with the “divine idea.” There is much fanciful, grotesque description in *Sartor*, but also deep thought and beautiful imagery. The hearty love of truth seems to constitute the germ of Mr. Carlyle’s philosophy, as Milton said it was the foundation of eloquence. And with this he unites the “gospel of work,” duty and obedience. “*Laborare est orare*—work is worship.” In 1834, Mr. Carlyle left the “ever-silent whinstones of Nithsdale” for a suburb of London—a house in the “remnant of genuine old Dutch-looking Chelsea”—the now famous Cheyne Row, where he resided till his death. In 1837 he delivered lectures on *German Literature* in Willis’s Rooms; and in the following year another course in Edward Street, Portman Square, on the *History of Literature, or the Successive Periods of European Culture*. Two other courses of lectures—one on the *Revolutions of Modern Europe*, 1839, and the other on *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 1840—added to the popularity of Mr. Carlyle. It appeared, said Leigh Hunt, “as if some Puritan had come to life again, liberalised by German philosophy and his own intense reflections and experience.” This vein of Puritanism running through the speculations of the lecturer and moral censor, has been claimed as peculiarly northern. “That earnestness,” says Mr. Hannay, “that grim humour—that queer, half-sarcastic, half-sympathetic fun—is quite Scotch. It appears in Knox and Buchanan, and it appears in Burns. I was not surprised when a schoolfellow of Carlyle’s told me that his favourite poem as a boy was *Death and Dr. Hornbook*. And if I were asked to explain this originality, I should say that he was a Covenanter



coming in the wake of the eighteenth century and the transcendental philosophy. He has gone into the hills against "Shams," as they did against Prelacy, Erastianism, and so forth. But he lives in a quieter age and in a literary position. So he can give play to the humour which existed in them as well, and he overflows with a range of reading and speculation to which they were necessarily strangers." But at least one-half the originality here sketched, style as well as sentiment, must be placed to the account of German studies. In 1837 appeared *The French Revolution, a History*, by Thomas Carlyle. This is the ablest of all the author's works, and is indeed one of the most remarkable books of the age. The first perusal of it forms a sort of era in a man's life, and fixes for ever in his memory the ghastly panorama of the Revolution, its scenes and actors. In 1838 Mr. Carlyle collected his contributions to the Reviews, and published them under the title of *Miscellanies*, extending to five volumes. The biographical portion of these volumes—essays on Voltaire, Mirabeau, Johnson and Boswell, Burns, Sir Walter Scott, &c.—is admirably executed. They are compact, complete, and at once highly picturesque and suggestive. The character and history of Burns he has drawn with a degree of insight, true wisdom, and pathos not surpassed in any biographical or critical production of the present century... The next two appearances of Mr. Carlyle were political, and on this ground he seems shorn of his strength. *Chartism*, 1839, and *Past and Present*, 1843, contain many weighty truths and shrewd observations, directed against all shams, cant, formulas, speciosities, &c.; but when we look for a remedy for existing evils, and ask how we are to replace the forms and institutions which Mr. Carlyle would have extinguished, we find little to guide us in our author's prelections. The only tangible measures he proposes are education and emigration, with a strict enforcement of the penal laws. We would earnestly desire to extend still more the benefits of education; but when Mr. Carlyle vituperates the present age in comparison with the past, he should recollect how much has been done of late years to promote the instruction of the people. The next work of our author was a special service to history and to the memory of one of England's historical worthies. His collection of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, with *Elucidations*, two volumes, 1845, is a good work well done. "The authentic utterances of the man Oliver himself," he says, "I have gathered them from far and near; fished them up from the foul Lethæan quagmires where they lay buried; I have washed or endeavoured to wash them clean



from foreign stupidities—such a job of buck-washing as I do not long to repeat—and the world shall now see them in their own shape.” The world was thankful for the service, and the book, though large and expensive, had a rapid sale. The speeches and letters of Cromwell thus presented, the spelling and punctuation rectified, and a few words occasionally added for the sake of perspicuity, were first made intelligible and effective by Mr. Carlyle; while his editorial “elucidations,” descriptive and historical, are often felicitous. ....

6. Another series of political tracts, entitled *Latter-day Pamphlets*, 1850, formed Mr. Carlyle’s next work. In these the censor appeared in his most irate and uncompromising mood, and with his peculiarities of style and expression in greater growth and deformity. He seemed to be the worshipper of mere brute-force, the advocate of all harsh, coercive measures. Model prisons and schools for the reform of criminals, poor-laws, churches as at present constituted, the aristocracy, parliament, and other institutions, were assailed and ridiculed in unmeasured terms, and, generally, the English public was set down as composed of sham-heroes and a valet or *flunkey* world. On some political questions and administrative abuses, bold truths and merited satire appear in the pamphlets; but, on the whole, they must be considered, whether viewed as literary or philosophical productions, as unworthy of their author.....

7. In 1858 appeared the first portion of Mr. Carlyle’s long-expected work, the *History of Friedrich II., called Frederick the Great*, volumes I and II. The third and fourth volumes were published in 1862, and the fifth and sixth, completing the work, in 1865. A considerable part of the first volume is devoted to “clearing the way,” for the approach of the hero, and tracing the Houses of Brandenburg and Hohenzollern. Frederick, as Mr. Carlyle admits, was rather a questionable hero. But he was a reality, and had “nothing whatever of the hypocrite or phantasm.” This was the biographer’s inducement and encouragement to study his life. “How this man, officially a king withal, comported himself in the eighteenth century, and managed *not* to be a liar and charlatan as his century was, deserves to be seen a little by men and kings, and may silently have didactic meanings in it.” And the eighteenth century is cordially abused as a period of worthlessness and inanity. “What little it *did*, we must call Friedrich; what little it *thought*, Voltaire.” But as the eighteenth century had also David Hume, Adam Smith, Samuel Johnson, Henry Fielding, and Robert Burns—to say nothing of Chatham and Burke, we



must demur to such extravagant and wholesale condemnation. These idiosyncrasies and prejudices of Mr. Carlyle must be taken, like his peculiar style, because they are accompanied by better things—by patient historical research, by “vivid glances across the mists of history,” by humour, pathos, and eloquence.

8. Shortly after the completion of this laborious History, Mr. Carlyle was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, and on April 2, 1866, he delivered his installation address—an extemporaneous effusion, or at least spoken without notes, and quite equal, in literary power, to his published works. His triumph on this occasion was followed by a heavy calamity, the loss of his wife, who died before his return to England. “For forty years she was the true and loving helpmate of her husband, and by act and word unweariedly forwarded him as none else could, in all of worthy that he did or attempted. She died at London, 21st April 1866, suddenly snatched away from him, and the light of his life as if gone out.” Such is part of the inscription on the tomb of this excellent woman.

9. The subsequent publications of Mr. Carlyle have been short addresses on the topics of the day. In 1867 an article in *Macmillan's Magazine* entitled *Shooting Niagara*, in the style of the *Latter-day Pamphlets*, predicted a series of evils and disasters from the Reform Act; another occasional utterance was in favour of emigration; a third on the war between France and Germany (1870); and a fourth on the Eastern Question (1878). *Early Kings of Norway*; also *The Portraits of John Knox*, appeared in 1875; and in 1882, *Reminiscences of my Irish Journey, 1849.—Chambers?*

## II. Critical Observations on Carlyle's Writings.

[From Minto's “*Manual of English Prose Literature*.”]

1. Carlyle is sometimes loosely spoken of as a great “thinker,” but his power does not lie in the regions of the dry understanding, in analysis, argument, or practical judgment. In his youth he was distinguished as a mathematician; but when he turned to the study of men, he took fire: on anything connected with man, he felt too profoundly to reason well. His whole nature rose in rebellion against cold-blooded analysis and matter-of-fact argument. In his works he is never tired of sneering at “Philosophism,” the “Dismal Science” of Political Economy, “Attorney Logic,” and suchlike. He had a natural antipathy to such ways of approaching men and the affairs of men. He was naturally incapable of De Quincey's



pursuit of character or meaning into minute shades, and of Macaulay's elaborate refutations by copious instance and analogy. Take, for example, his *Hero-worship*. Instead of analysing, as De Quincey might have done, the elements of greatness in his heroes, or of producing, as Macaulay might have done, argumentative arrays of actual undeniable achievements as the proof of their title to admiration, he exercises his ingenuity in representing their greatness under endless varieties of striking images; the hero is "a flowing light-fountain of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness;" "at all moments the Flame-image glares in upon him;" "a messenger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us."

2. Though deficient as an analyst and as a debater, he shows in other forms abundance of the elementary intellectual force principally concerned in analysis and debate. Had his feelings been less dominant, he might have developed into a profound professor of what he calls the Dismal Science, and might even, with unprecedented persuasive skill, have converted the world to the practice of Malthusianism. But feeling and natural impulses chained his strong intellect to their service; and instead of scientific analysis and solid argument, the result is a splendour and originality of imagery and dramatic grouping that entitle him to rank near Shakespeare, or with whoever may be placed next to our received ideal of the incomparable.

3. A man of feeling and impulse, his feelings and impulses were very different from what we find in natures constitutionally fitted for enjoyment, in the born lovers of existence, his own "eupeptic" men. In his works we encounter something very different from Macaulay's uniform glow of buoyant hopefulness, hearty belief in human progress, and confident plausible judgment of men and events. We find gloomy views of man and his destiny, a stern gospel of work, judgments passed in strong defiance of conventional standards, and towering egotism under the mask of humour.

4. In another aspect he strikes us as offering a considerable contrast to De Quincey. The Opium-Eater, though not by any means a eupeptic man, was an avowed Endæmonist, "hated an inhuman moralist like unboiled opium," and was a lover of repose and of the softer emotions. In Carlyle, on the contrary, the central and commanding emotion is Power; he is all for excitement and energy. We have already seen the difference in their ways of viewing great men; that De Quincey admires them in a passive attitude, while Carlyle is raised by the thought of their achievements to the loftiest heights



of ideal energy. We have no means of knowing how Carlyle would have enjoyed the actual control of human beings as a commander or a civic ruler—like Cromwell, Frederick, Mirabeau, or Dr. Francia; but he shows a most thorough enjoyment of commanding authority in the imagination. His thirst for the ideal enjoyment seem insatiable, and drives him to exaggerate the influence of his chosen heroes, and to suppress and understate the influence of their coadjutors. "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the Great Men who have worked there." "All things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment of thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these."

5. A good way of representing the difference between two such writers is to look through their works, and piece together their conceptions of the universe in their highest moods of sublimity. De Quincey sees midsummer moving over the heavens like an army with banners; hears cathedral music in the confused noise of mountain-streams; loves to contemplate calmly in the mirror of such minds as "Walking Stewart's" the whole mighty vision of the sentient universe, oriental pageantry, revolutionary convulsions, civic splendour; and occasionally lifts his mind to travel in the same calm way through the illimitable grandeurs of astronomical spaces. Contrast this repose of attitude with the violent excitement of Carlyle's favourite conceptions: the world pictured as a dark simmering pit of Tophet, wild puddle of muddy infatuations, of irreconcilable incoherences, bottomless universal hypocrisies, an ungenue phantasmagory of a world, full of screechings and gibberings, of foul ravening monsters, of meteor-lights and Bacchic dances, the wild universe storming in upon man infinite vague-menacing.

6. Carlyle's love of powerful excitement finds a magnificent outlet in his humour and derision. Psychologists tell us that the basis of laughter is a sudden accession of pleasure in the shape of the special elation of power and superiority. Carlyle avowedly approves of laughter—sets up hearty laughter as a criterion of genuine human worth; and, as we shall see when we come to his qualities of style, he is self-indulgent, if not intemperate, in the exercise of his own sense of the ludicrous. His mirth is robust—as he says himself, in describing the Norsemen, "a great broad Brobdingnag grin of true humour."



7. His pathos is of the kind that goes naturally with excessive indulgence in the excitement of power. Wherever there is a height there is a corresponding hollow; the lover of intoxicating excitement too surely pays the penalty in intervals of exhaustion, of unutterable depression and despondency. With all his fire, his gospel of work, and his denunciation of unproductive sentimentality, Carlyle has his inevitable fits of the melting mood. We shall see that at times he is overpowered with sadness at the thought of human miseries and perplexities, and that he bemoans with more than Byronic despondency the irresistible movement of time.

8. We have already spoken of the amount of intellectual effort spent upon the production of our author's books. The grand duty of work that he preaches with such earnestness he was no less earnest in performing. He gathered his materials not only with painful labour, but with scrupulous respect for minute fact. This for him was but a small part of the toil of writing history; when the materials were collected, a much larger drought of his impatient energy was spent in filling the dry facts with human interest. The mere writing was never an easy or happy task for him: he wrote at white heat, with feverish effort, with all his faculties intensely concentrated. If we take any page of his "French Revolution" and try to conceive how it was built up, and what care was expended on the separate elements of it before the whole was "flung out of him," as he said, in the final convulsive effort of composition, we come as near as we can to realising what labour went to the making of Carlyle's books.

9. He does not seem to have done his work with the fitful irregularity of Christopher North, but rather to have acted on the Virgilian plan of so much manuscript each day. Such work as his could hardly have been accomplished without the steadiest concentration of endeavour. It is known that in composing the "French Revolution" he set himself daily to produce so much, and in all probability he composed his other works on the same rigid method. In this respect he is a much safer model to the general run of students than the versatile and discursive Macaulay.

10. OPINIONS.—Carlyle's doctrines are the first suggestions of an earnest man, adhered to with unreasoning tenacity. As a rule, with no exception that is worth naming, they take account mainly of one side of a case. He was too impatient of difficulties, and had too little respect for the wisdom and experience of others, to submit to be corrected; opposition rather confirmed him in his own opinion. Most of his practical suggestions had already been tried and found wanting,



or had been made before and judged impracticable upon grounds that he did not or would not understand. His modes of dealing with pauperism and crime were in full operation under the despotisms of Henry VII and Henry VIII. His theory of a hero-king, which means in practice an accidentally good and able man in a series of indifferent or bad despots, has been more frequently tried than any other political system. Asia at this moment contains no government that is not despotic. His views in other departments of knowledge also, are chiefly determined by the strength of unreasoning impulses.

This will appear when we state his opinions in some detail. We throw them for convenience into a few familiar divisions.

11. *Psychology*.—He disclaims the ordinary mental analysis. He speaks with great contempt of "motive-grinding." He sat through Thomas Brown's lectures with perpetual inward protest, declaring that he did not want the mind to be taken to pieces in that way.

We need not therefore look in his writings for any large views of the mind, for any enunciation of doctrines of a comprehensive kind. In his partiality for everything German, he adopts with unquestioning faith some Kantian and other transcendentalisms of German origin. His own original views of the mind are fragmentary and somewhat fanciful.

We may apply the title "Psychological" to some of his doctrines about the indissoluble union of certain qualities. For one example, take his theory of Laughter as the criterion of goodness. "Readers," he says, "who have any tincture of Psychology, know . . . that no man who has once heartily and wholly laughed can be altogether irreclaimably bad." Again, "Laughter, also, if it come from the heart, is a heavenly thing." As another example, take his doctrine that Intellect is the true measure of worth. "Human Intellect, if you consider it well, is the exact summary of Human Worth." "A man of intellect, of real and not sham intellect, is by the nature of him likewise inevitably a man of nobleness." "The able man is definable as the born enemy of Falsity and Anarchy and the born soldier of Truth and Order."

Such doctrines are, it is hardly necessary to say, far from clear. Very bad men often laugh heartily enough, in the ordinary sense of the word; and very able men, in the ordinary sense of the word "able," are often very great scoundrels. Carlyle's unreserved admirers probably bring themselves to accept such dogmas by laying stress on the saving clauses,—“if it comes from the heart;”



"if you consider it well;" and suchlike. But none of these clauses will save the doctrines if they are taken in the ordinary meaning of their words; and one may well doubt whether great writers are to be allowed the privilege of throwing the ancient boundaries of words into confusion.

Other examples of his habit of attaching laudatory predicates to what he has a liking for, without much regard to the fitness of the application, are such as the following: "All deep things are song. It seems somehow the very central essence of us, Song; as if all the rest were but wrappings and hulls;" "You may see how a man would fight by the way in which he sings;" "'The imagination that shudders at the hell of Dante,' is not that the same faculty, weaker in degree, as Dante's own?" "Your genuine poet is the real Encyclopædist," &c., &c. All these involve indifferent psychology, and they are but samples of more of the same kind.

12. *Ethics*.—Doctrines in Ethics we shall keep as far as possible distinct from doctrines in Theology; although many of our author's doctrines are two-sided.

(1.) According to Carlyle, the chief end of life is the performance of Duty. He is full of contempt for the pursuit of happiness, and pours out his most indignant eloquence against the theory of life that would make happiness the end. "In all situations out of the Pit of Tophet, wherein a living man has stood or can stand, there is actually a prize of quite *infinite* value placed within his reach—namely, a *Duty* for him to do: this highest Gospel..... forms the basis and worth of all other Gospels whatsoever."

His stern creed allows no collateral support to the discharge of duty. If men labour in hope of reward, they are still unconverted, still in darkness. They must recognise that they deserve nothing. To Methodism, "with its eye for ever turned on its own navel," and torturing itself with the questions—"Am I right, am I wrong? Shall I be saved, shall I be damned?"—he gives the lofty advice—"If thou be a man, reconcile thyself" to the fact "that thou *art* wrong; thou art like to be damned;" "then first is the devouring Universe subdued under thee," and there breaks upon thee "dawn as of an everlasting morning." On the same principle of acknowledging utter worthlessness, and recognising that nothing too bad can befall us, we are advised—"Fancy that thou deservest to be hanged (as is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot; fancy that thou deservest to be hanged in a hair-halter, it will be a luxury to die in hemp." In short, our only consolation in life is to be the sense of doing our duty;



as regards everything else, we must expect nothing, lest we should be disappointed.

(2.) But Duty is an abstraction, an empty Ideal: does Carlyle recommend any duties in particular? Yes.

The first great duty is the duty of Work—Action, Activity. This eminent feature in his preaching has been called “The Gospel of Labour.” According to this Gospel, all the “peopled, clothed, articulate-speaking, high-towered, wide-acred World” has been “made a world for us” by work; the individual that does not lend a hand fails in his duty as a denizen of the Universe. Man’s greatest enemy is Disorder; his most imperative and crying duty is to subdue disorder, convert chaos into order and method; the able-bodied or able-minded man that stands idle deserves unspeakable contempt,—he is a dastard, a fool, a *simulacrum*; he does not fulfil his destiny as a man. Wherefore, “Do thy little stroke of work; this is Nature’s voice, and the sum of all the commandments, to each man.”

To the question, What is to be done? he answers peremptorily, “‘Do the Duty which lies nearest thee,’ which thou knowest to be a duty.” “Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God’s name. .... Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” He never recommends or brings prominently forward care in the choice of a vocation; he is so eager and impetuous to have something done, that he has no thought of cautioning against the hasty adoption of unsuitable work. He evidently considers there is much more danger in idleness. We must “live and not lie sleeping while it is called to-day.” “Something must be done, and soon.” Doubt is removed only by activity.

He upholds the dignity of work at all points. “All true work is religion.” “‘*Laborare est orare*’—work is worship.” The “Captains of industry” are the true aristocracy. The great army of workers, “Ploughers, Spinners, Builders; Prophets, Poets, Kings; Brindleys and Goethes, Odins and Arkwrights;”—this grand host is “noble, every soldier in it; sacred, and alone noble.” “Two men he honours, and no third”—“the toilworn Craftsman who conquers the Earth,” and “him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable.”

He sets off his own Gospel of Work against other pretended Gospels. He despatches the Stoics in the person of Epictetus by telling them that “*the end of man is an Action and not a Thought*, though it were the noblest.” He taunts those that make happiness the end of life with the declaration, that “the night once come, our unhappiness, our happiness—



it is all abolished; vanished, clean gone; a thing that has been." "But our work,—behold, that is not abolished, that has not vanished: our work, behold, it remains, or the want of it remains;—for endless 'Times and Eternities, remains." He is also vigorous against what he calls sentimentalism, which he dubs "twin-sister to Cant." "The barrenest of all mortals is the sentimentalist;" "in the shape of work he can do nothing."

Another great duty is the duty of Obedience. Not only is obeying the best discipline for governing, and as such extolled in Abbot Samson, and recommended to the Duke of Logwood, but "Obedience is our universal duty and destiny; wherein whoso will not bend must break." 'Too early and too thoroughly we cannot be trained to know that "Would in this world of ours is as mere zero to Should." Again to the same effect—"Obedience is the primary duty of man. No man but is bound indefeasibly with all force of obligation to obey."

There is nothing peculiar upon the face of these precepts, except their strength; they might almost stand in the Institutions of the Jesuits. Here and there throughout his works we meet with qualifications. He denounces the obedience of the Jesuits—"Obedience to what is wrong and false?—good heavens! there is no name for such a depth of human cowardice and calamity." It is the heroic, the divine, the true, that he would have us obey. When the powers set over us are no longer anything divine, resistance becomes a deeper law of order than obedience.

If we ask how we are to know the heroic, the divine, we are left to understand that it will make itself manifest. The true King "carries in him an authority from God, or man will never give it him." "He who is to be my Ruler, whose will is to be higher than my will, was chosen for me in heaven."

Another duty is the duty of Veracity, of Sincerity as opposed to Cant, the duty of being Real and not a Sham. On these virtues and their opposites, on those that observe them and those that violate them, he expends much eloquence. The 'French Revolution' is almost a continued sermon on the evils of insincerity, hollowness, quackery, and on the good of the corresponding virtues. And in none of his works can we read far without encountering some declamation on Truth, Sincerity, Reality, Falsehood, Cant, Puffery, Sham.

On one point his preaching of Truth may mislead. He does not seem to think that Truth requires a man to make a frank and open declaration of his beliefs. For his own part, at least, he is very reticent as to his real opinions, on matters



of religion for instance; and he praises Goethe's example of wrapping up opinions in mysterious oracles. The fact would seem to be, that all his requirements of Veracity, Sincerity, Reality, are satisfied by one thing, the conscientious performance of one's appointed work. This, if we look beneath the gorgeous verbal opulence of the preacher, would seem to be the whole duty of man. If he engages to cut thistles, let him cut them with all his might. If he engages to review authors, let him read their works conscientiously. If he engages to write history, let him diligently search out its facts.

His characteristic love of reality appears in his preference of Fact to Fiction, and his condemnation of Fine Art as Dilettantism. . . . .

#### ELEMENTS OF STYLE.

##### *Vocabulary.*

13. His command of words must be pronounced to be of the highest order. Among the few that stand next to Shakspeare, he occupies a very high place.

14. As his peculiar feelings are strongly marked, so are the special regions of his verbal copiousness. As a matter of course, he was specially awake to, and specially retained, expressions suiting his peculiar vein of strength, rugged sublimity, and every form of ridicule and contempt down to the lowest tolerable depths of coarseness. It would be interesting to collect the various forms that he uses to express his sense of the confusion, the chaotic disorder, of these latter days. An estimate of his abundance on that or any other of his favourite topics would give the reader the most vivid idea of his lingual resources.

15. Having a strong natural bent for the study of character, he is a consummate master of the requisite phraseology. In the language needful for describing character, he probably comes nearer Shakspeare than any other of our great writers. To be convinced of this, we have only to look at his opulence in bringing out the leading features of such a man as John Sterling. Between the subjective and the objective side, the language of feeling and the language of gesture and action, he is pretty evenly divided—a master of both vocabularies.

16. In the use of Latinised terms, as against Saxon, he follows the Shaksperian type of an indifferent mixture. He does not particularly affect either extreme. Often on themes where other writers would use solemn words of Latin origin, he prefers what Leigh Hunt calls a 'noble simplicity,' which others might call "profane



familiarity;" but he employs liberally the Latinised vocabulary when it suits his purpose. His acquaintance with technical names is considerable. He makes frequent metaphorical and literal application of the language of mathematics and natural philosophy—his favourite studies when a young man. He knew also the vocabulary of several industries, as well as of the social mechanism and institutions.

17. Two circumstances in particular make his command of acknowledged English appear less than it really is. First, revelling in his immense force of Comparison or Assimilation, he shows a prodigious luxuriance of the figures of similarity—nicknaming personages, applying old terms to new situations, and suchlike. He often substitutes metaphorical for real names when the real are quite sufficient, and perhaps more suitable for the occasion. Now this habit, not to speak of its lowering the value and freshness of his genius by overdoing and over-affecting originality of phrase, often makes it appear as if he did not know the literal and customary names of things, and were driven to make shift with these allusive names. Another circumstance produces the same impression. He is most liberal in his coinage of new words, and even new forms of syntax. For this he was taken to task by his friend John Sterling, part of whose criticism we quote:—

"A good deal of the language is positively barbarous. 'Environment,' 'vestural,' 'stertorous,' 'visualised,' 'completed,' and others I think to be found in the first thirty pages, are words, so far as I know, without any authority; some of them contrary to analogy; and none repaying by their value the disadvantage of novelty. To these must be added new and erroneous locutions: 'whole other tissues' for *all the other*, and similar uses of the word *whole*; 'orients' for *pearls*; 'lucid' and 'lucent' employed as if they were different in meaning; 'hulls' perpetually for *coverings*, it being a word hardly used, and then only for the husk of a nut; 'to insure a man of misapprehension'; 'talented,' a mere newspaper and hustings word, invented, I believe, by O'Connell. I must also mention the constant recurrence of some words in a quaint and queer connection, which gives a grotesque and somewhat repulsive mannerism to many sentences. Of these the commonest offender is 'quite'; which appears in almost every page, and gives at first a droll kind of emphasis; but soon becomes wearisome. 'Nay,' 'manifold,' 'cunning enough significance,' 'faculty' (meaning a man's rational or moral *power*), 'spe-



cial,' 'not without,' haunt the reader as if in some uneasy dream, which does not rise to the dignity of nightmare."

18. In this passage, which Carlyle himself has given to the world, some of his most striking peculiarities of diction are noticed. To give an adequate view of his verbal eccentricities, would be no small labour. He extends the admitted licences of the language in every direction, using one part of speech for another, verbs for nouns, nouns for verbs, adverbs and adjectives for nouns. His coinages often take the form of new derivatives—"benthamee," "amusee." He abuses the license of giving plurals to abstract nouns: thus "credibilities," "moralities," "theological philosophies," "transcendentalisms and theologies."

19. This excess of metaphors, new words, and grammatical licenses is in favour of the readers enjoyment, but not so much in favour of the student's instruction. It belongs to the inimitable, unreproducible part of the style; the student cannot take the same liberties without bearing the charge of copying an individual manner, instead of deriving from the common fund of the language. So far it may stimulate to do likewise in one's own independent sphere; but close imitation is little better than parody, and imitation of any kind runs some danger of ridicule.

#### *Sentences.*

20. In his essays, particularly in the earlier essays and in his "Life of Schiller," Carlyle shows none of the irregularity of structure that appears in his matured style. He has an admirable command of ordinary English, and constructs his sentences to suit the motion of a massive and rugged, yet musical rhythm.

Even in his essays, though himself writing with great care, he speaks slightly of painstaking in the structure of sentences. What he really objects to is making sentences after an artificial model, of a particular length, or with a particular cadence, or with a particular number of members; but he speaks as if he condemned all labour in the arrangement of words, and lays himself open to be quoted by any that would shirk the trouble of making themselves as intelligible as possible to their readers.

The sentences of his later manner we can describe in his own words. Among his editorial remarks on the style of Teufelsdröckh is the following:—

"Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed up by props (of parentheses and dashes), and ever with



this or the other tag-rag hanging from them; a few even sparw out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered."

• From this figurative description one would suppose his sentences to be extremely involved and complicated. As a matter of fact, they are extremely simple in construction—consisting, for the most part, of two or three co-ordinate statements, or of a short direct statement, eked out by explanatory clauses either in apposition or in the "nominative absolute" construction. These apposition and absolute clauses are the "tag-rags," and it is in the connection of them with the main statement that we find the "dashes and parentheses." This character of his sentence is so obvious that few examples will suffice:—

"Whatsoever sensibly exists, whatsoever represents Spirit to Spirit, is properly a Clothing, a suit of Raiment, put on for a season and to be laid off. Thus in this one pregnant subject of CLOTHES, rightly understood, is included all that men have thought, dreamed, done, and been: the whole External Universe and what it holds is but Clothing; and the essence of all Science lies in the PHILOSOPHY OF CLOTHES."

In this explanation of the Philosophy of Clothes, the sentences are free from intricacy. The second sentence exemplifies a very common form with Carlyle in his less irregular moods, although he sneers at some sentence-makers because they are very curious to have their sentence consist of three members; yet he seems to have been himself a lover of this peculiar cadence.

He very often uses the sentence of two members, one explanatory of the other—avoiding the error of joining them by a conjunction. Thus in his description of John Sterling's mother:—

"The mother was a woman of many household virtues; to a warm affection for her children, she joined a degree of taste and intelligence which is of much rarer occurrence."

As examples of his practice of *apposition*, take the following:—

"Biography is by nature the most universally profitable, universally pleasant of all things: especially Biography of distinguished individuals."

Speaking of John Sterling, he says:—

"To the like effect shone something, a kind of childlike, half-embarrassed shimmer of expression, on his fine vivid countenance; curiously mingling with its ardours and audacities."



The Crown-Prince's imprisonment by his father is thus described :—

“Poor Friedrich meanwhile has had a grim time of it these two months back ; left alone, in coarse brown prison dress, within his four bare walls at Cüstrin ; in uninterrupted, unfathomable colloquy with the Destinies and the Necessities there.”

In the following long sentence abundant use is made both of participle and of nominative absolute :—

“Eminent swill of drinking, with the loud coarse talk supposable, on the part of Mentzel and consorts, did go on, in this manner, all afternoon ; in the evening drunk Mentzel came out for air ; went strutting and staggering about ; emerging finally on the platform of some rampart, face of him huge and red as that of the foggiest rising moon ;—and stood, looking over into the Lorraine Country ; belching out a storm of oaths as to his taking it, as to his doing this and that ; and was even flourishing his sword by way of accompaniment ; when, lo, whistling slightly through the summer air, a rifle-ball from some sentry on the French side (writers say, it was a French drummer, grown impatient, and snatching a sentry's piece) took the brain of him or the belly of him : and he rushed down at once, a totally collapsed monster, and mere heap of dead ruin, never to trouble mankind more.”

We have seen that Macaulay's style may in an especial degree be called artificial, inasmuch as he makes prodigal use of special artifices of composition. Carlyle is artificial in a different sense ; at least he uses artifices of a different kind. His structure of sentence is extremely loose—is an extravagant antithesis to the periodic. His studied ruggedness and careless cumulative method are incompatible with measured balance of clause or sentence. We may say, with a rough approximation to truth, that Macaulay's artificiality lies in departing from ordinary colloquial structure, Carlyle's in departing from the ordinary structure of written composition.

In his ‘Life of Schiller,’ and in his earlier essays, Carlyle builds up his composition with elaborate care in the ordinary literary forms. The following periodic sentences are constructed with Johnsonian formality, and with more than Johnsonian elaboration :—

“Could ambition always choose its own path, and were will in human undertakings always synonymous with faculty, all truly ambitious men would be men of letters. Certainly, if we examine that love of power, which enters so largely into most practical calculations—nay, which our Utilitarian friends have recognised as the sole end and origin, both motive and reward, of all earthly enterprises, animating alike the philanthropist, the conqueror, the money-changer, and the missionary—we shall find that all other arenas



of ambition, compared with this rich and boundless one of Literature, meaning thereby whatever respects the promulgation of Thought, are poor, limited, and ineffectual. For dull, unreflective, merely instinctive as the ordinary man may seem, he has nevertheless, as a quite indispensable appendage, a head that in some degree considers and computes; a lamp or rushlight of understanding has been given him, which, through whatever dim, besmoked, and strangely diffractive media it may shine, is the ultimate guiding light of his whole path: and here as well as there, now as at all times in man's history, Opinion rules the world.".....

### *Paragraphs.*

21. In his more rhapsodical works, such as 'Chartism' and the 'Latter-Day Pamphlets,' he is an indifferent observer of paragraph method. The reader is bewildered by the introduction of reflections without any hint of their bearing on the theme in hand. Some pages remind us of his vivid descriptions of chaotic inundations that hide or sweep away all guiding-posts. Very seldom can we gather from the beginning of a paragraph what is to be its purport. No attempt is made to keep a main subject prominent. Whenever anything occurs to suggest one of his favourite themes of declamation, he embraces the opportunity, and lets his main business drop.

This applies to his "prophetical" utterances, where his great natural clearness both in matter and in manner seems to be abandoned. In his history the case is very different. There his arrangement is almost the perfection of clearness. He is at pains to make everything easy to the reader. When the bearing of a statement is not apparent, he is careful to make it explicit. In each paragraph the main subject is for the most part kept prominent,—his defiance of ordinary syntax giving him great facilities for a distinct foreground and background. He begins his paragraphs with some indications of their contents. Further, he is consecutive, and keeps rigidly to the point.

### *Figures of Speech.*

22. Teufelsdröckh is made to say, concerning style, that plain words are the skeleton, and metaphors "the muscles and tissues and living integuments;" further, that his own style is "not without an apoplectic tendency."

This might be quoted against Carlyle's own dictum, that "genius is unconscious of its excellence." His profusion of figurative language is perhaps the most striking monument of his originality and power.



23. *Figures of Similarity*.—His similitudes, forcibly hunted out from every region of his knowledge of nature and of books, are not merely fanciful embellishments—most of them go to the making of his vivid powers of description. The character, or personal appearance, or action of an individual; the character of a nation, a state of society, a political situation; the relative position of two belligerents,—everything, in short, that needs describing, he brings vividly before us in its leading features by some significant simile or metaphor.

This wealth of illustration is very noticeable in the description of character. For every personage of marked character he exerts himself to find a vivid similitude. “Acrid, corrosive, as the spirit of sloes and copperas, is Marat, Friend of the People.” Lafayette is “a thin constitutional Pedant; clear, thin, inflexible, as water turned to thin ice, whom no Queen’s heart can love.” The Countess of Darlington, George I.’s fat mistress, is “a cataract of tallow, with eyebrows like a cart-wheel, and dim coaly disks for eyes.” She is contrasted with the Duchess of Kendal, the lean mistress, “poor old anatomy or lean human nailrod.”

Every kind of situation, individual or social, is set forth in the same way. The ‘French Revolution’ is a blazing heap of similitudes; they meet us at every page in twos and threes. They are often very homely. The following, taken at random, are tolerably fair specimens:—

“Your Revolution, like jelly sufficiently boiled, needs only to be poured into shapes of Constitution, and ‘consolidated’ therein.”

“Military France is everywhere full of sour inflammatory humour, which exhales itself fuliginously, this way or that; a whole continent of smoking flax, which, blown on here or there by any angry wind, might so easily start into a blaze, into a continent of fire.”

“Such Patriotism, as snarls dangerously and shews teeth, Patrollotism shall suppress; or, far better, Royalty shall soothe down the anger of it by gentle pattings, and, most effectual of all, by fuller diet.”

The History of Friedrich is illuminated no less effectively. He speaks incidentally of the French Revolution as—

“That whirlwind of the universe—lights obliterated—and the torn wrecks of Earth and Hell hurled aloft into the Empyrean—black whirlwind which made even apes serious, and drove most of them mad.”

The above is a characteristic figure. The following,



along with a characteristic similitude, introduces one of his favourite personifications :—

“As the History of Friedrich, in this Cüstrian epoch, and indeed in all epochs and parts, is still little other than a whirlpool of simmering confusions, dust mainly, and sibylline paper-shreds, in the pages of poor Dryasdust, perhaps we cannot do better than snatch a shred or two (of the partly legible kind, or capable of being made legible) out of that hideous caldron; pin them down at their proper dates; and try if the reader can, by such means, catch a glimpse of the thing with his own eyes.”

His account of old Friedrich's violence to young Friedrich upon the attempted “desertion,” is a fair sample of his figurative manner at its acme :—

“Friedrich Wilhelm's conduct, looked at from without, appear that of a hideous royal ogre, or blind anthropophagous Polyphemus fallen mad. Looked at from within, where the Polyphemus has his reasons, and a kind of inner rushlight to enlighten his path, and is not bent on man-eating, but on discipline in spite of difficulties,—it is a wild enough piece of humanity, not so much ludicrous as tragical. Never was a Royal bear so led about before by a pair of conjuring pipers in the market, or brought to such a pass in his dancing for them.”

Two other things must be noticed before we have a complete idea of his employment of similitudes. One is a habit, already partially alluded to, of keeping up descriptive metaphors, and using them instead of the literal names, or along with the literal names, as a kind of permanent Homeric epithet. Thus, he never mentions the Countess of Darlington without designating her as the “cataract of tallow”; or the Duchess of Kendal without something equivalent to “May-pole or lean human nailrod.” The other noticeable thing is his frequent repetition, with or without variations, of certain favourite figures. Perhaps the most characteristic is his stock of metaphors and similes drawn from the great features of the material world to illustrate the moral; his “pole-star veiled by thick clouds,” his earthquakes, mad foam-oceans, Noah's deluge, mud-deluges, cesspools of the Universe, Pythons, Megatheriums, Chimæras, Dead-Sea Apes, and suchlike.

He has also certain favourite *personifications*, which are made to do a great deal of service. Such are the Destinies, the Necessities, the dumb Veracities, the Eternal Voices, Fact, Nature, all which are so many synonyms for the homely phrase, “circumstances beyond our control.” We have seen that when Friedrich was shut up



alone at Cüstrin, he was left in "colloquy with the Destinies and the Necessities there." In another passage he is said to be "shut out from the babble of fools, and conversing only with the dumb Veracities, with the huge inarticulate moanings of Destiny, Necessity, and Eternity." When he submits to his father, he is said to be "loyal to Fact," which means that he yields to what he cannot overcome. In like manner, Democracy, "the grand, alarming, imminent, indisputable Reality," is "the inevitable Product of the Destinies": whoever refuses to recognise that the world has come to this, "is disloyal to Fact." "All thinking men, and good citizens of their country" "have an ear for the small still voices and eternal intimations"; in other words, discern the best course that circumstances will admit of. "The eternal regulations of the Universe," "the monition of the gods in regard to our affairs," "which, if a man know, it is well with him," are other figurative expressions to the same effect. . . . .

Much of his peculiar manner is made up of the special figures of Interrogation, Exclamation, and Apostrophe.

24. *Interrogation* is a large element in his mannerism. It is not merely an occasional means of special emphasis; it is a habitual mode of transition, used by Carlyle almost universally for the vivid introduction of new agents and new events. Thus—

"But on the whole, Paris, we may see, will have little to devise; will only have to borrow and apply. And then, as to the day, what day of all the calendar is fit, if the Bastille Anniversary be not?"

After the Queen's execution, he asks, "Whom next, O Tinville?"

In like manner, recounting some of the proceedings in the Parliamentary war, he says—

"Basing is black ashes, then: and Langford is ours, the garrison 'to march forth to-morrow at twelve of the clock, being the 18th instant.' And now the question is, Shall we attack Dennington or not?"

With these vivid epic interrogations, there is usually, as in the above examples, a mixture of something like the figure called *Vision*. He supposes himself present at the deliberation of a scheme, the preparation of a great event, and suggests ideas as an interested spectator. Thus, after representing how Louis deliberated whether he should try to conciliate the people, or canvass for foreign assistance, he asks—"Nay, are the two hopes inconsistent?" Again, he apostrophises



the National Assembly expecting a visit from the King, with—

“Think therefore, Messieurs, what it may mean; especially how ye will get the Hall decorated a little . . . Some fraction of velvet carpet, cannot that be spread in front of the chair, where the Secretaries usually sit?”

One or two instances give but a faint impression of what is so prominent in his style.

25. *Exclamation* occurs in every mood. Sometimes in wonder and elation; sometimes in derision and contempt; sometimes in pity, sometimes in fun, sometimes in real admiration and affection. An example or two may be quoted. Thus—“How thou fermentest and elaboratest, in thy great fermenting-vat and laboratory of an Atmosphere, of a World, O Nature!” Many such exclamations of wonder occur in his *Sartor*. His exclamations of derision are addressed, not to individuals, but to imaginary personages, as when he addresses Dryasdust,—“Surely at least you might have made an index for these books;” or to collective masses, as when he exclaims of duellists—“Deuce on it, the little spitfires!” Towards individuals he seldom if ever expresses either reverential wonder on the one hand, or contempt on the other. The scenes of the French Revolution often call forth exclamations of pity and horror. “Miserable De Launay!” “Hapless Deshottes and Varigny!”—such expressions are frequent. At times, also, we come across such exclamations as—“Horrible, in lands that had known equal justice!” As an instance of a humorous touch, take his exclamation on one of the Kaisers—“Poor soul, he had six-and-twenty children by one wife; and felt that there was need of appanages!” His expressions of admiration for his heroes are numerous. On Mirabeau he exclaims—“Rare union: this man can live self-sufficing—yet lives also in the lives of other men; can make men love him, work with him; a born king of men!” Of Sterling he says—“A beautiful childlike soul!” Oliver and Friedrich he frequently salutes with expressions of sympathising admiration. Sometimes, as he has a habit of doing with all his strong effects—in a kind of deprecating way—he puts the exclamations into the mouths of other people—“‘Admirable feat of strategy! What a general, this Prince Carl!’ exclaimed mankind.” “‘Magnanimous!’ exclaim Noailles and the paralysed French gentleman: ‘Most magnanimous behaviour on his Prussian Majesty’s part!’ own they.”

26. *Apostrophe*.—The apostrophising habit is perhaps the greatest notability of his mannerism. His make of mind



impels him to adopt this art of style, apart from his consciousness of the power it gives him as a literary artist. It provides one outlet among others for his deep-seated dramatic tendency. Farther, it suits his active turn of mind and favourite mode of the enjoyment of power; it gives scope for his daring familiarity with personages, whether for admiration or for humour, and meets with no check from any regard for offended conventionalities. Not so frequently does he address in tones of pity; still, in the moving scenes of the French Revolution, and elsewhere, some of his apostrophes are very touching. . . . .

27. His *irony* is a department in itself. It often turns up in such passing touches as—"Our Nell Gwyn defender-of-the-faith;" "Christ's crown soldered on Charles Stuart's;" "most Christian kingship, and most Talleyrand bishop;" Shakespeare, "whom Sir Thomas Lucy, *many thanks to him*, was for sending to the treadmill." In his treatment of modern society, irony is often kept up through long passages; thus "The Nigger Question" is full of irony. It is to be noted that his irony can always be known as such. He has none of the De Foe irony that runs a danger of being mistaken for earnest. The following is a short specimen, on the New Poor-Law, from "Chartism":—

"To read the reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners, if one had faith enough, would be a pleasure to the friend of humanity. One sole recipe seems to have been needful for the woes of England—'refusal of outdoor relief.' England lay in sick discontent, writhing powerless on its fever-bed, dark, nigh desperate, in wastefulness, want, improvidence, and eating care, till, like like Hyperion down the eastern steeps, the Poor-Law Commissioners arose, and said, Let there be workhouses, and bread of affliction and water of affliction there! It was a simple invention; as all truly great inventions are. And see, in any quarter, instantly as the walls of the workhouse arise, misery and necessity fly away, out of sight, out of being, as is fondly hoped, dissolve into the inane; industry, frugality, fertility, rise of wages, peace on earth and goodwill towards men do,—in the Poor-Law Commissioners' reports,—infallibly, rapidly or not so rapidly, to the joy of all parties, supervene."

#### QUALITIES OF STYLE.

##### *Simplicity.*

28. (1). Our author, as we remarked in speaking of his vocabulary, uses a fair admixture of homely words. When hard to understand, he is so not from the use of technical and scholastic terms, but from the use of words of his own coining. A



reader of Carlyle, not knowing Latin, has often to consult a dictionary, and consults it in vain. 'It is a jest about him that he aspires to the honour conferred upon Jean Paul Richter, of having a dictionary written for himself.

As regards his similitudes, we have already seen that many of them are homely and graphic, while the few stock figures connected with his fanciful conception of the universe, the action of the Destinies, Eternal Voices, and suchlike, rather perplex than render comprehension easy. It should, however, be noticed, that to those once initiated into the circle of these figures they present a really simple, because very indiscriminating, way of expressing complicated circumstances. "Loyalty to facts" becomes a very glib figure to those that have once mastered its meaning.

His sentence-structure is favourable to simplicity, being free from involution and intricacy. The want of concatenation, and consecutiveness mars, as has been said, the intelligibility of his rhapsodical 'Pamphlets' and his 'French Revolution.' These drawbacks do not occur so much in the Friedrich.

(2). His subjects are far from abstruse, being narratives and familiar questions of practice. The difficulty of the "Sartor Resartus" is due, not so much to the nature of the subject, as to the intentional mystifications, and the substitution of allusions and figures for plain statements. If it were stript of its gorgeous imagery and "boiled down," the residuum would probably be more intelligible than interesting.

(3). Occasionally, for the sake of effects of comprehensive strength, he uses abstract expressions; but his diction is upon the whole concrete to a degree rarely found among writers of prose. Even when he uses abstractions, he violates grammar to give them plurals, and thereby treat them as class names; he vivifies some of them further by treating them as personalities. His love of the concrete often appears in his repeating a number of suggestive particulars or circumstances instead of one general designation. Thus, in his 'Chartism,' when discussing the discontent of the working classes, he refers to it again and again by mentioning significant symptoms—"Glasgow Thuggery, Chartist torch-meetings, Birmingham riots, Swing conflagrations;" or again, "Chartism with its pikes, Swing with his tinder-box." When he has to state his conviction that much misery is caused by poor Irish labourers



finding no work in Ireland, and coming to England in search of it, he does so in very picturesque terms:—

“But the thing we had to state here was our inference from that mournful fact of the third Sanspotatoe, coupled with this other well known fact, that the Irish speak a partially intelligible dialect of English, and their fare across by steam is fourpence sterling! Crowds of miserable Irish darken all our towns. The wild Milesian features, looking false ingenuity, restlessness, unreason, misery, and mockery, salute you on all highways and byways. The English coachman, as he whirls past, lashes the Milesian with his whip, curses him with his tongue: the Milesian is holding out his hat to beg.”

When he desires a more comprehensive effect, he personifies this influx of Irish destitution under the name of the Irish giant Despair, and thus describes him:—

“I notice him in Piccadilly, blue-visaged, thatched in rags, a blue child on each arm; hunger-driven, wide-mouthed, seeking whom he may devour.”

With regard to this picturesque statement, the remark may be made that, while each particular is immediately and easily understood, it may be doubted whether the meaning that the writer professedly wishes to convey is so easily apprehended as it would be in the driest general statement. Upon the whole, this excess of concreteness is perhaps not in favour of our understanding the general drift, but the reverse. Most readers complain that Carlyle is bewildering in his prophetic utterances. The excess of figures and the absence of plain generalities is perhaps partly the cause. Let any reader of ordinary analytic power try, after reading ‘*Chartism*,’ to recall the train of argument, and he will find his confused recollection of individually vivid figures rather against than in favour of the effort.

#### *Clearness.*

29. *Perspicuity*.—In his expressly didactic or prophetic works, he shows, as we have seen, little concern to impart his views without confusion. Nor are his essays so perspicuous as the essays of Macaulay. The *History of Friedrich* is, however, a clearer narrative than the ‘*History of England*’; it lifts us more above the confusion of details by means of comprehensive summaries and divisions with descriptive titles, and it brings leading events into stronger relief by assigning to subordinate events a subordinate place in the narrative.

30. *Precision*.—He is not an exact writer. Hating close analysis, his aim always is to give the broad general features



rather than the minute details. He has little of the hair-splitting, dividing and distinguishing mania of De Quincey; no desire to sift his opinions on a topic, and say distinctly what they are and what they are not. Some idea of the difference between them in this respect is obtained by comparing Carlyle's various lucubrations on Jean Paul Richter with De Quincey's article on the same subject. But we see the utter antagonism of manner as regards precision at its height when we reflect how De Quincey would have treated such a subject as the discontent of the working classes. If Carlyle had been at pains to reduce his political views to distinct heads as De Quincey would have done, one would have been better able to judge of their universally alleged poverty.

*Strength.*

31. We have already touched on a good many of the peculiarities of Carlyle's singular force of style. The language that Sterling calls "positively barbarous"—the rugged derivatives and quaint solecisms—is very stimulating when it is intelligible. Among his figures of speech we meet with many elements of strength—powerful and original similitudes, bold metaphors, vivid handling of abstractions, choice of telling circumstances, sensational contrasts, habitual exaggeration of language, and daring liberties with ordinary forms of speech. Here we have for the production of telling literally effects a catalogue of instrumentalities that will hardly be paralleled from any writer after Shakspeare. And this is not at all. The comprehensive summaries, already mentioned as his principal instruments of perspicuity, embracing as they do a great range of particulars, more than any other of his arts, lift up and dilate the mind with a feeling of extended power.

The crowning feat of strength is the combination of circumstances in effective groups—the imagination of impressive situations. Carlyle's power in this respect is nearly, if not quite, equal to Shakspeare's—equal, that is, in degree, though not perhaps in kind. It was first revealed in his "Sartor Resartus"; and none of his later works surpass this first great production in the imagination of rugged grandeur. Take, for example, his picture of "Teufelsdröckh at the North Pole":—

"More legitimate and decisively authentic is Teufelsdröckh's appearance and emergence (we know not well whence) in the solitude of the North Cape, on that June Midnight. He has a 'light blue Spanish cloak' hanging round him, as his 'most com-



modious, principle, indeed sole upper-garment; and stands there on the World-promontory, looking over the infinite Brine, like a little blue Belfry (as we figure), now motionless indeed, yet ready, if stirred, to ring quaintest changes.

“ ‘ Silence as of death,’ writes he; ‘ for Midnight, even in the Arctic latitudes, has its character: nothing but the granite cliffs ruddy-tinged, the peaceable gurgle of that slow-heaving Polar Ocean, over which in the utmost North the great Sun hangs low and lazy, as if he too were slumbering. Yet is his cloud-couch wrought of crimson and cloth-of-gold; yet does his light stream over the mirror of waters, like a tremulous fire pillar, shooting downwards to the abyss, and hide itself under my feet. In such moments, Solitude also is invaluable; for who would speak, or be looked on, when behind him lies all Europe and Africa, fast asleep, except the watchmen; and before him the silent Immensity, and palace of the Eternal, whereof our Sun is but a porch-lamp?’ ”.....

Let us take a brief glance at the principal themes or occasions that excite his powers of gorgeous expression. (1.) He puts forth all his powers to extol his favourite recipes for clearing the world of confusion. One or two fragments of such eloquence have been already given. Above all, he is ever on the watch for an opportunity of enforcing his Gospel of Work, the panacea which alone brings order out of confusion, cosmos out of chaos. Such passages as the following may be described as “bracing.” The general effect of such a Gospel is to exalt the sense of active vigour, to disturb, if not dispel, the indolent mood compatible with adoring reverence or tender sentiment:—

“ Any law, however well meant as a law, which has become a bounty on unthrift, idleness, bastardy, and beer-drinking, must be put an end to. In all ways it needs, especially in these times, to be proclaimed aloud that for the idle man there is no place in this England of ours. He that will not work, and save according to his means, let him go elsewhere; let him know that for him the Law has made no soft provision, but a hard and stern one; that, by the Law of Nature, which the law of England would vainly contend against in the long-run, *he* is doomed either to quit these habits, or miserably be extruded from this earth, which is made on principles different from these . . . A day is ever struggling forward, a day will arrive in some approximate degree, when he who has no work to do, by whatever name he may be named, will not find it good to show himself in our quarter of the solar system.”

His eulogy of the heroes, the men that he pronounces to have done genuine work in the world, has the same bracing tone. Prostrate adoration, as we have seen, does not suit



his temperament; he "fraternises" with the heroes, holds up them and their works as patterns to all men of the heroic mould. True, he commands the multitude to worship, and declaims against them if they refuse; but he is rarely found in the adoring attitude himself.

(2.) Perhaps his richest vein is his unmeasured invective against everything that defeats the hero's efforts to redress the universal confusion, and his overcharged pictures of that confusion. He does not assail individuals for single acts—that would have a narrow and rancorous effect. When an offender crosses his path, he denounces him not personally, but as one of "the Devil's Regiment," as adding his little contribution to the "bellowing chaos," "the wide weltering confusion." Most of his stormy warfare of words is directed against the evils of this life gathered up under abstractions familiar to the most incidental reader of his books—Shams, Unveracities, Speciosities, Phantasms, and suchlike. We must be content for examples with fragments already quoted.

(3.) He describes with surpassing power the grand operations of Nature in her terrible aspects. He is not insensible to beneficent grandeurs, but his temperament inclines him more to the gloomy side—to the "tropical tornado" more than to the "rainbow and orient colours." At times he represents that a God, an Order, a Justice, presides over the "wild incoherent waste;" that to a man understanding the Sphinx riddle (another variety for the "eternal regulations of the Universe"), Nature is "of womanly celestial loveliness and tenderness;" that "Nature, Universe, Destiny, Existence, however we name this grand unnameable fact in the midst of which we live and struggle, is as a heavenly bride and conquest to the wise and brave." But on this aspect of Nature he dwells less than on the opposite. More often "the wild Universe storms in on Man infinite, vague menacing." It is on this aspect of the Universe that he has accumulated his "Titanic" grandeurs of expression.....

*Melody—Harmony—Taste.*

32. As respects the melodious combination of words, Carlyle, though not below average, is by no means a model. He despises all study to avoid harsh successions; he considers such art to be mere trifling in the present age. In his own attempts to "sing"—that is, to write verses before he fully discovered that his strength lay in prose—the rhythm is conspicuously bad.

Still his prose has a peculiar strain—a characteristic movement. From such passages as have been given, the reader



with an ear for cadence will have no difficulty in making it out. It corresponded to the emphatic sing-song intonation of his voice; a stately sort of rhythm, after a fashion of stateliness that differs from De Quincey's in the rugged unmelodious flow, and the frequent recurrence of emphasis.

As regards *Harmony* between rhythm and the sense, with Carlyle, as with other impassioned writers, the agreement is most perfect when he is writing at full swing in his favourite mood.

He has an ostensible and paraded contempt for the idea of art, or of composition intended to please. Himself nothing if not artistical, he insists on being supposed to wear no garb but the mantle of the prophet. Though thus formally disavowing art, he really does, consciously or unconsciously, sacrifice even truth to be artistical. Not to review him as an artist, is to do him an injustice. As an artist, he errs chiefly in carrying his favourite effects to excess.

### III. Carlyle as Man of Letters, Critic, and Historian.

1. Carlyle was so essentially a Preacher that the choice of a profession made for him by his parents was in some measure justified; but he was also a keen critic, unamenable to ecclesiastic or other rule, a leader of the revolutionary spirit of the age, even while protesting against its extremes: above all, he was a literary Artist. Various opinions will continue to be held as to the value of his sermons; the excellence of his best workmanship is universally acknowledged. He was endowed with few of the qualities which secure a quick success—fluency, finish of style, the art of giving graceful utterance to current thought; he had in full measure the stronger if slower powers—sound knowledge, infinite industry, and the sympathetic insight of penetrative imagination—that ultimately hold the fastnesses of fame. His habit of startling his hearers, which for a time restricted, at a later date widened their circle. There is much, sometimes even tiresome, repetition in Carlyle's work; the range of his ideas is limited, he plays on a few strings, with wonderfully versatile variations; in reading his later we are continually confronted with the "old familiar faces" of his earlier essays. But, after the perfunctory work for Brewster he wrote nothing wholly commonplace; occasionally paradoxical to the verge of absurdity, he is never dull.

2. Setting aside his TRANSLATIONS, always in prose, often in verse, masterpieces of their kind, he made his first mark in CRITICISM, which may be regarded as a higher kind of translation: the great value of his work in this direction is due to



his so regarding it. Most criticism has for its aim to show off the critic; good criticism interprets the author. Fifty years ago, in allusion to methods of reviewing, not even now wholly obsolete, Carlyle wrote :

"The first and most convenient is for the reviewer to perch himself resolutely, as it were, on the shoulder of his author, and therefrom to show as if he commanded him and looked down upon him by natural superiority of stature. Whatsoever the great man says or does the little man shall treat with an air of knowingness and light condescending mockery, professing with much covert sarcasm that this or that is beyond *his* comprehension, and cunningly asking his readers if *they* comprehend it."

3. There is here perhaps some "covert sarcasm" directed against contemporaries who forgot that their mission was to pronounce on the merits of the books reviewed, and not to patronise their authors; it may be set beside the objection to Jeffrey's fashion of saying, "I like this; I do not like that," without giving the reason why. But in this instance the writer did reck his own rede. The temptation of a smart critic is to seek or select legitimate or illegitimate objects of attack; and that Carlyle was well armed with the shafts of ridicule is apparent in his essays as in his histories; superabundantly so in his letters and conversation. His examination of the *German Playwrights*, of *Taylor's German Literature*, and his inimitable sketch of Herr Döring, the hapless biographer of Richter, are as amusing as Macaulay's *coup de grâce* to Robert Montgomery. But the graver critic would have us take to heart these sentences of his essay on Voltaire :

"Far be it from us to say that solemnity is an essential of greatness; that no great man can have other than a rigid vinegar aspect of countenance, never to be thawed or warmed by billows of mirth. There are things in this world to be laughed at as well as things to be admired. Nevertheless, contempt is a dangerous aliment to sport in; a deadly one if we habitually live in it. The faculty of love, of admiration, is to be regarded as a sign and the measure of high soul; unwisely directed, it leads to many evils; but without it, there cannot be any good. Ridicule, on the other hand, is the smallest of all faculties that other men are at pains to repay with any esteem.....Its nourishment and essence is denial, which hovers only on the surface, while knowledge dwells far below,.....it cherishes nothing but our vanity, which may in general be left safely enough to shift for itself."

4. We may compare with this one of the writer's numerous warnings to young men taking to literature, as to drinking, in despair of anything better to do, ending with the exhorta-



tion, "Witty above all things, oh, be not witty"; or turn to the passage in the review of Sir Walter Scott:—

"Is it with ease or not with ease that a man shall do his best in any shape; above all, in this shape justly named of soul's travail, working in the deep places of thought?.....Not so now nor at any time.....Virgil and Tacitus, were they ready writers? The whole *Prophecies of Isaiah* are not equal in extent to this cobweb of a Review article. Shakespeare, we may fancy, wrote with rapidity; but not till he had thought with intensity,.....no easy writer he, neither was Milton one of the mob of gentlemen that write with ease. Goethe tells us he "had nothing sent to him in his sleep," no page of his but he knew well how it came there. Schiller—"konnte nie fertig werden"—never could get done. Dante sees himself "growing lean" over his *Divine Comedy*; in stern solitary death wrestle with it, to prevail over it and do it, if his uttermost faculty may; hence too it is done and prevailed over, and the fiery of it endures for evermore among men. No; creation, one would think, cannot be easy; your Jove has severe pains and fire flames in the head, out of which an armed Pallas is struggling! As for manufacture, that is a different matter.....Write by steam if thou canst contrive it and sell it, but hide it like virtue."

5. In these and frequent similar passages lies the secret of Carlyle's slow recognition, long struggle, and ultimate success; also of his occasional critical intolerance. Commander-in-chief of the "red artillery," he sets too little store on the graceful yet sometimes decisive charges of the light brigades of literature. He feels nothing but contempt for the banter of men like Jerrold; despises the genial pathos of Lamb; and salutes the most brilliant wit and exquisite lyrist of our century with the Puritanical comment, "Blackguard Heine." He deified work as he deified strength; and so often stimulated his imitators to attempt to leap beyond their shadows. Hard work will not do everything: a man can only accomplish what he was born fit for. Many, in the first flush of ambition doomed to wreck, are blind to the fact that it is not in every ploughman to be a poet, nor in every prize-student to be a philosopher. Nature does half: after all perhaps the larger half. Genius has been absurdly defined as "an infinite capacity for taking trouble;" no amount of pumping can draw more water than is in the well. Himself in "the chamber of little ease," Carlyle travestied Goethe's "worship of sorrow" till it became a pride in pain. He forgot that rude energy requires restraint. Hercules Furens and Orlando Furioso did more than cut down trees; they tore them up; but to no useful end. His power is often almost Miltonic; it is never Shakespearian: and his insistent earnestness would run the risk of fatiguing us were it not redeemed by his humour. But



he errs on the better side; and his example is a salutary counteractive in an age when the dust of so many skirmishers obscures the air, and laughter is too readily accepted as the test of truth. His stern conception of literature accounts for his exaltations of the ideal, and denunciations of the actual, profession of letters in passages which, from his habit of emphasising opposite sides of truth, instead of striking a balance, appear almost side by side in contradiction. The following condenses the ideal:—

If the poor and humble toil that we have food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he may have guidance, freedom, immortality? These two in all degrees I honour; all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth. Doubt, desire, sorrow, remorse, indignation, despair itself—all these like hell-hounds lie beleaguering the souls of the poor day worker as of every man; but he bends himself with free valour against his task and all these are stifled—all these shrink murmuring far off in their caves.

Against this we have to set innumerable tirades on the crime of worthless writing, *e. g.*—

No mortal has a right to wag his tongue, much less to wag his pen, without saying something; he knows not what mischief he does, past computation, scattering words without meaning, to afflict the whole world yet before they cease. For thistledown flies abroad on all winds and airs of wind. . . . Ship-loads of fashionable novels, sentimental rhymes, tragedies, farces . . . tales by flood and field are swallowed monthly into the bottomless pool; still does the press toil, . . . and still in torrents rushes on the great army of publications to their final home; and still oblivion, like the grave, cries give! give! How is it that of all these countless multitudes no one can . . . produce ought that shall endure longer than “snowflake on the river? Because they are foam, because there is no reality in them. . . .” Not by printing ink alone does man live. Literature, as followed at present, is but a species of brewing or cooking, where the cooks use poison and vend it by telling innumerable lies.

6. These passages owe their interest to the attestation of their sincerity by the writer's own practice. “Do not,” he counsels one of his unknown correspondents, “take up a subject because it is singular and will get you credit, but because you *love* it,” and he himself acted on the rule. Nothing more impressed the student of Carlyle's works than his *thoroughness*. He never took a task in hand without the determination to perform it to the utmost of his ability; consequently when he satisfied himself that he was master of his subject he satisfied his readers; but this mastery was only attained, as it is only attainable, by the most rigorous



research. He seems to have written down his results with considerable fluency: the molten ore flowed freely forth, but the process of smelting was arduous. The most painful part of literary work is not the actual composition, but the accumulation of details, the wearisome compilation of facts, weighing of previous criticisms, the sifting of the grains of wheat from the bushels of chaff. This part of his task Carlyle performed with an admirable conscientiousness. His numerous letters applying for out-of-the-way books to buy or to borrow, for every pamphlet throwing light on his subject, bear testimony to the careful exactitude which rarely permitted him to leave any record unread or any worthy opinion untested about any event of which or any person of whom he undertook to write. From *Templand* (1833) he applied for seven volumes of Beaumarchais, three of Bassompierre, the *Memoirs* of Abbé George, and every attainable account of Cagliostro and the Countess de la Motte, to fuse into *the Diamond Necklace*. To write the essay on *Werner* and the *German Playwrights* he swam through seas of trash. He digested the whole of *Diderot* for one review article. He seems to have read through *Jean Paul Richter*, a feat to accomplish which Germans require a special dictionary. When engaged on the Civil War he routed up a whole shoal of obscure seventeenth century papers from Yarmouth, the remnant of a yet larger heap, "read hundredweights of dreary books," and endured "a hundred Museum headaches." "In grappling with *Friedrich* he waded through so many gray historians that we can forgive his sweeping condemnation of their dulness. He visited all the scenes and places of which he meant to speak, from St. Ives to Prague, and explored the battlefields. Work done after this fashion seldom brings a swift return; but if it is utilised and made vivid by literary genius it has a claim to permanence. Bating a few instances where his sense of proportion is defective, or his eccentricity is in excess, Carlyle puts his ample material to artistic use; seldom making ostentation of detail, but skilfully concentrating, so that we read easily and readily recall what he has written. Almost every thing he has done has made a mark: his best work in criticism is final, it does not require to be done again. He interests us in the fortunes of his leading characters: *first*, because he feels with them; *secondly*, because he knows how to distinguish the essence from the accidents of their lives, what to forget and what to remember, where to begin and where to stop. Hence, not only his set biographies, as of Schiller and of Sterling, but the shorter notices in his *Essays*, are intrinsically more complete and



throw more real light on character than whole volumes of ordinary memoirs.

7. With the limitations above referred to, and in view of his antecedents, the range of Carlyle's critical appreciation is wonderfully wide. Often perversely unfair to the majority of his English contemporaries, the scales seem to fall from his eyes in dealing with the great figures of other nations. The charity expressed in the saying that we should judge men, not by the number of their faults, but by the amount of their deflection from the circle, great or small, that bounds their being, enables him often to do justice to those most widely differing in creed, sentiment, and lines of activity from each other and from himself. When treating congenial themes he errs by overestimate rather than by depreciation: among the qualities of his early work, which afterwards suffered some eclipse in the growth of other powers, is its flexibility. It was natural for Carlyle, his successor in genius in the Scotch lowlands, to give an account of Robert Burns which throws all previous criticism of the poet into the shade. Similarly he has strong affinities to Johnson, Luther, Knox, Cromwell, to all his so-called heroes: but he is fair to the characters, if not always to the works, of Voltaire and Diderot, slurs over or makes humorous the escapades of Mirabeau, is undeterred by the mysticism of Novalis, and in the fervour of his worship fails to see the gulf between himself and Goethe.

8. Carlyle's *Essays* mark an epoch, *i. e.*, the beginning of a new era, in the history of British criticism. The able and vigorous writers who contributed to the early numbers of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* successfully applied their taste and judgment to such works as fell within their sphere, and could be fairly tested by their canons; but they passed an alien act on everything that lay beyond the range of their insular view. In dealing with the efforts of a nation, whose literature, the most recent in Europe save that of Russia, had only begun to command recognition, their rules were at fault and their failures ridiculous. If the old formulæ have been theoretically dismissed, and a conscientious critic now endeavours to place himself in the position of his author, the change is largely due to the influence of Carlyle's *Miscellanies*. Previous to their appearance, the literature of Germany, to which half of these papers are devoted, had been (with the exception of Sir Walter Scott's translation of *Goetz von Berlichingen*, De Quincey's travesties, and Taylor's renderings from Lessing) a sealed book to English readers, save those who were



willing to breathe in an atmosphere of Coleridgean mist. Carlyle first made it generally known in England, because he was the first fully to apprehend its meaning. The *Life of Schiller*, which the author himself depreciated, remains one of the best of comparatively short biographies, it abounds in admirable passages (conspicuously the contrast between the elder and the younger of the Dioscuri at Weimar) and has the advantage to some readers of being written in classical English prose.

9. To the essays relating to Germany, which we may accept as the *disjecta membra* of the author's unpublished History, there is little to add. In these volumes we have the best English account of the Nibelungen Lied—the most graphic, and in the main most just analyses of the genius of Heyne, Richter, Novalis, Schiller, and, above all, of Goethe, who is recorded to have said, "Carlyle is almost more at home in our literature than ourselves." With the Germans he is on his chosen ground; but the range of his sympathies is most apparent in the portrait gallery of eighteenth-century Frenchmen that forms, as it were, a proscenium to his first great History. Among other papers in the same collection the most prominent are the *Signs of the Times* and *Characteristics*, in which he first distinctly broaches some of his peculiar views on political philosophy and life.

10. The scope and some of the limitations of Carlyle's critical power are exhibited in his second Series of Lectures, delivered in 1838, when (*æt.* 43) he had reached the maturity of his powers. The first three of these lectures, treating of Ancient History and Literature, bring into strong relief the speaker's inadequate view of Greek thought and civilisation:—

Greek transactions had never anything alive, no result for us, they were dead entirely . . . all left is a few ruined towers, masses of stone and broken statuary.....The writings of Socrates are made up of a few wire-drawn notions about virtue; there is no conclusion, no word of life in him.

11. These and similar dogmatic utterances are comments of the Hebrew on the Hellene. To the Romans, "the men of antiquity," he is more just, dwelling on their agriculture and road-making as their "greatest work written on the planet;" but the only Latin author he thoroughly appreciates is Tacitus, "a Colossus on edge of dark night." Then follows an exaltation of the Middle Ages, as those in which "we see belief getting the victory over unbelief," in a strain suitable to Cardinal Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. In the struggle between the Popes and the Hohenstaufens, Carlyle's whole sympathy is with Gregory and Hildebrand: he refers



to the surrender at Canossa with the characteristic comment, "the clay that is about man is always sufficient ready to assert its right; the danger is always the other way, that the spiritual part of man will become overlaid with the bodily part." In the same vein is his praise of Peter the Hermit, whose motto was not the "action, action" of Demosthenes, but "belief, belief." In the brief space of those suggestive though unequal discourses the speaker allows awkward proximity to some of the self-contradictions which, even when scattered farther apart, perplex his readers and render it impossible to credit his philosophy with more than a few strains of consistent thought.

In one page 'the judgments of the heart are of more value than those of the head.' In the next 'morals in a man are the counterpart of the intellect that is in it.' The Middle Ages were 'a healthy age,' and therefore there was next to no Literature. 'The strong warrior disdained to write.' 'Actions will be preserved when all writers are forgotten.' Two days later, apropos of Dante, he says, 'The great thing which any nation can do is to produce great men.....When the Vatican shall have crumbled to dust, and St. Peter's and Strassburg Minster be no more; for thousands of years to come Catholicism will survive in this sublime relic of antiquity—the *Divina Commedia*.'

12. Passing to Spain, Carlyle salutes Cervantes and the Cid,—calling Don Quixote the "poetry of comedy," "the age of gold in self-mockery,"—pays a more reserved tribute to Calderon, ventures on the assertion that Cortes was "as great as Alexander," and gives a sketch, so graphic that it might serve as a text for Motley's great work, of the way in which the decayed Iberian chivalry, rotten through with the Inquisition, broke itself on the Dutch dykes. After a brief outline of the rise of the German power, which had three avatars—the overwhelming of Rome, the Swiss resistance to Austria, and the Reformation—we have a rough estimate of some of the Reformers. Luther is exalted even over Knox; Erasmus is depreciated, while Calvin and Melancthon are passed by.

13 The chapter on the Saxons, in which the writer's love of the sea appears in picturesque reference to the old rover kings, is followed by unusually commonplace remarks on earlier English literature, interspersed with some of Carlyle's refrains.

The mind is one, and consists not of bundles of faculties at all .....the same features appear in painting, singing, fighting.....when I hear of the distinction between the poet and the thinker, I really



see no difference at all.....Bacon sees, Shakespeare sees through,... Milton is altogether sectarian—a Presbyterian one might say—he got his knowledge out of Knox..... Eve is a cold statue.

14. Coming to the well-belaboured eighteenth century—when much was done of which the nineteenth talks, and massive books were written that we are content to criticise—we have the inevitable denunciations of scepticism, materialism, argumentation, logic; the quotation (referred to a motto in the Swiss gardens), “Speech is silvern, silence is golden,” and a loud assertion that all great things are silent. The age is commended for Watt’s steam engine, Arkwright’s spinning jenny, and Whitfield’s preaching, but its policy and theories are alike belittled. The summaries of the leading writers are interesting, some curious, and a few absurd. On the threshold of the age Dryden is noted “as a great poet born in the worst of times”: Addison as “an instance of one formal man doing great things”: Swift is pronounced “by far the greatest man of that time, not unfeeling,” who “carried sarcasm to an epic pitch”: Pope, we are told, had “one of the finest heads ever known.” Sterne is handled with a tenderness that contrasts with the death sentence pronounced on him by Thackeray, “much is forgiven him because he loved much,.....a good simple being after all.” Johnson, the “much enduring,” is treated as in the *Heroes* and the *Essay*. Hume, with “a far duller kind of sense,” is commended for “noble perseverance and Stoic endurance of failure; but his eye was not open to faith,” etc. On which follows a stupendous criticism of Gibbon, whom Carlyle, returning to his earlier and juster view, ended by admiring.

With all his swagger and bombast, no man ever gave a more futile account of human things than he has done of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

15. The sketch of the Pre-Revolution period is slight, and marked by a somewhat shallow reference to Rousseau. The last lecture on the recent German writers is a mere *réchauffé* of the *Essays*. Carlyle closes with the famous passage from Richter, one of those which indicate the influence in style as in thought of the German over the Scotch humorist. “It is now the twelfth hour of the night, birds of darkness are on the wing, the spectres uprear, the dead walk, the living dream. Thou, Eternal Providence, wilt cause the day to dawn.” The whole volume is a testimony to the speaker’s power of speech, to his often unsurpassed penetration, and to the hopeless variance of the often rapidly shifting streams of his thought.....



16. When Carlyle generalises, as in the introductions to his Essays, he is apt to thrust his own views on his subject and on his readers; but, unlike De Quincey, who had a like love of excursus, he comes to the point before the close. The one claimed the privilege, assumed by Coleridge, of starting from no premises and arriving at no conclusion; the other, in his capacity as a critic, arrives at a conclusion, though sometimes from questionable premises. It is characteristic of his habit of concentrating, rather than condensing, that Carlyle abandoned his design of a history of the Civil Wars for *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*. The events of the period, whose issues the writer has firmly grasped, are brought into prominence mainly as they elucidate the career of his hero; but the "elucidations" have been accepted, with a few reservations, as final. No single work has gone so far to reverse a traditional estimate. The old current conceptions of the Protector are refuted out of his own mouth; but it was left for his editor to restore life to the half-forgotten records, and sweep away the clouds that obscured their revelations of a great though rugged character. *Cromwell* has been generally accepted in Scotland as Carlyle's masterpiece—a judgment due to the fact of its being, among the author's mature works, the least apparently opposed to the theological views prevalent in the north of our island. In reality—though containing some of his finest descriptions and battle-pieces, conspicuously that of "Dunbar"—it is the least artistic of his achievements, being overladen with detail and superabounding in extract. A good critic has said that it was a labour of love, like Spedding's *Bacon*; but that the correspondence, lavishly reproduced in both works, has "some of the defects of lovers' letters to those to whom they are not addressed." Carlyle has established that Oliver was not a hypocrite, "not a man of falsehood, but a man of truth": he has thrown doubts on his being a fanatic; but he has left it open to M. Guizot to establish that his latter rule was a practical despotism.....

17. Carlyle's style, in the chiaro-oscuro of which his Histories and three-fourths of his Essays are set, has naturally provoked much criticism and some oburgation. M. Taine says it is "exaggerated and demoniacal." Hallam could not read *The French Revolution* because of its "detestable" style, and Wordsworth, whose own prose was perfectly limpid, is reported to have said, "No Scotchman can write English. C—— is a pest to the language." Carlyle's style is not that of Addison, of Berkeley, or of Helps; its peculiarities are due to the eccentricity of an always eccen-



tric being; but it is neither affected nor deliberately imitated. It has been plausibly asserted that his earlier manner of writing, as in *Schiller*, under the influence of Jeffrey, was not in his natural voice. "They forget," he said, referring to his critics, "that the style is the skin of the writer, not a coat: and the public is an old woman." Erratic, metaphorical, elliptical to excess, and therefore a dangerous model, "the mature oaken Carlylese style," with its freaks, "nodosities and angularities," is as set and engrained in his nature as the *Birthmark* in Hawthorne's romance. To recast a chapter of the *Revolution* in the form of a chapter of Macaulay would be like rewriting Tacitus in the form of Cicero, or Browning in the form of Pope. Carlyle is seldom obscure, the energy of his manner is part of his matter; its abruptness corresponds to the abruptness of his thought, which proceeds often as it were by a series of electric shocks, that threaten to break through the formal restraints of an ordinary sentence. He writes like one who must, under the spell of his own winged words, at all hazards, determined to convey his meaning; willing, like Montaigne, to "despise no phrase of those that run in the streets," to speak in strange tongues, and even to coin new words for the expression of a new motion. It is his fashion to care as little for rounded phrase as for logical argument: and he rather convinces and persuades by calling up a succession of feelings than by a train of reasoning. He repeats himself like a preacher, instead of condensing like an essayist. The American Thoreau writes in the course of an incisive survey:—

Carlyle's.....mastery over the language is unrivalled; it is with him a keen, resistless weapon; his power of words is endless. All nature, human and external, is ransacked to serve and run his errands. The bright cutlery, after all the dross of Birmingham has been thrown aside, in his style. . . . He has broken the ice, and the torrent streams forth. He drives six-in-hand over ruts and streams and never upsets. . . . With wonderful art he grinds into paint for his picture all his moods and experiences, and crashes his way through shoals of dilettante opinions. It is not in man to determine what his style shall be, if it is to be his own.

18. But though a rugged, Carlyle was the reverse of a careless or ready writer. He weighed every sentence: if in all his works, from *Sartor* to the *Reminiscences*, you pencil-mark the most suggestive passages you disfigure the whole book. His opinions will continue to be tossed to and fro; but as an artist he continually grows. He was, let us grant, though a powerful, a one-sided historian, a twisted though in some aspects a great moralist; but he was, in every sense,



a mighty painter, now dipping his pencil "in the hues of earthquake and eclipse," now etching his scenes with the tender touch of a Millet.

19. Emerson, in one of his early letters to Carlyle, wrote, "Nothing seems hid from those wonderful eyes of yours; those devouring eyes; those thirsty eyes; those portrait-eating, portrait-painting eyes of thine." Men of genius, whether expressing themselves in prose or verse, on canvas or in harmony, are, save when smitten, like Beethoven, by some malignity of Nature, endowed with keener physical senses than other men. They actually, not metaphorically, see more and hear more than their fellows. Carlyle's supersensitive ear was to him, through life, mainly a torment; but the intensity of his vision was that of a born artist, and to it we owe the finest descriptive passages, if we except those of Mr. Ruskin, in English prose. None of our poets, from Chaucer and Dunbar to Burns and Tennyson, have been more alive to the influences of external nature. His early letters abound in passages like the following, on the view from Arthur Seat:—

The blue, majestic, everlasting ocean, with the Fife hills swelling gradually into the Grampians behind; rough reags and rude precipices at our feet (where not a hillock rears its head unsung) with Edinburgh at their base clustering proudly over her rugged foundations and covering with a vapoury mantle the jagged black masses of stonework that stretch far and wide, and show like a city of Faeryland . . . I saw it all last evening when the sun was going down, and the moon's fine crescent, like a pretty silver creature as it is, was riding quietly above me.

20. Compare with this the picture, in a letter to Sterling, of Middlebie burn, "leaping into its cauldron, singing a song better than Pasta's"; or that of the Scaur Water, that may be compared with Tennyson's verses in the valley of Caunteretz; or the sketches of the Flemish cities in the tour of 1842, with the photograph of the lace-girl, recalling Sterne at his purest; or the account of the "atmosphere like silk" over the moor, with the phrase, "it was as if Pan slept"; or the few lines written at Thurso, where "the sea is always one's friend"; or the later memories of Mentone, old and new, in the *Reminiscences* (vol. ii, pp. 335-340.)

21. The most striking of those descriptions are, however, those in which the interests of some thrilling event or crisis of human life or history steal upon the scene, and give it a further meaning, as in the dim streak of dawn rising over



St. Abb's Head on the morning of Dunbar, or in the following famous apostrophe:—

O evening sun of July, how at this hour thy beams fall slant on reapers amid peaceful, woody fields; on old women spinning in cottages; on ships far out in the silent main; on balls at the Orangerie at Versailles, where high-roughed dames of the palace are even now dancing with double-jacketed Hussar officers;—and also on this roaring Hell-porch of an Hotel-du-Ville.

21. Carlyle is, here and there, led astray by the love of contrast; but not even Heinrich Heine has employed antithesis with more effect than in the familiar passage on the sleeping city in *Sartor*, beginning, "Ach mein Lieber.....it is a true sublimity to dwell here," and ending, "But I, mein Werther, sit above it all. I am alone with the stars." His thought, seldom quite original, is often a resuscitation or survival, and owes much of its celebrity to its splendid brocade. *Sartor Resartus* itself escaped the failure that was at first threatened by its eccentricity partly from its noble passion, partly because of the truth of the "clothes philosophy," applied to literature as to life.

22. His descriptions, too often caricatures, of men are equally vivid. They set the whole great mass of *Friedrich* in a glow; they lighten the tedium of *Cromwell's* lumbering despatches; they give a heart of fire to *The French Revolution*. Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* attempts and fulfils on a smaller what Carlyle achieved on a greater scale. The historian makes us sympathise with the real actors, even more than the novelist does with the imaginary characters on the same stage. From the account of the dying Louis XV. to the "whiff of grapeshot" which closed the last scene of the great drama, there is not a dull page. 'Théroigne de Méricourt, Marat, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Mirabeau, Robespierre, Talleyrand. Louis the Simple, above all Marie Antoinette—for whom Carlyle has an affection akin to that of Mirabeau—so kindle and colour the scene that we cannot pause to feel weary of the phrases with which they are labelled. The author's letters show the same power of baptizing, which he used often to unfair excess. We can no more forget Count d'Orsay as the "Phœbus Apollo of Dandyism," Daniel Webster's "brows like cliffs and huge black eyes," or Wordsworth "munching raisins" and recognising no poet but himself, or Maurice "attacked by a paroxysm of mental cramp," than we can dismiss from our memories "The Glass Coachman" or "The Tobacco Parliament."

23. Carlyle quotes a saying of Richter, that Luther's words were like blows; he himself compares those of Burns to



cannon-balls; much of his own writing is a fusilade. All three were vehement in abuse of things and persons they did not like; abuse that might seem reckless, if not sometimes coarse, were it not redeemed, as the rogueries of Falstaff are, by strains of humour. The most Protean quality of Carlyle's genius is his humour: now lighting up the crevices of some quaint fancy, now shining over his serious thought like sunshine over the sea, it is at its best as finely quaint as that of Cervantes, more humane than Swift's. There is in it, as in all the highest humour, a sense of apparent contrast, even of contradiction, in life, of matter for laughter in sorrow and tears in joy. He seems to check himself, and as if afraid of wearing his heart in the sleeve, throws in absurd illustrations of serious propositions, partly to show their universal range, partly in obedience to an instinct of reserve, to escape the reproach of sermonising and to cut the story short. Carlyle's grotesque is a mode of his golden silence, a sort of Socratic irony, in the indulgence of which he laughs at his readers and at himself. It appears now in the form of transparent satire, ridicule of his own and other ages, now in droll reference or mock-heroic detail, in an odd conception, a character sketch, an event in parody, in an antithesis or simile,—sometimes it lurks in a word, and again in a sentence. In direct pathos—the other side of humour—he is equally effective. His denunciations of sentiment remind us of Plato attacking the poets, for he is at heart the most emotional of writers, the greatest of the prose poets of England; and his dramatic sympathy extends alike to the actors in real events and to his ideal creations. Few more pathetic passages occur in literature than his “stories of the deaths of kings.” The following among the less known of his eloquent passages is an apotheosis of their burials:—

In this manner did the men of the Eastern Counties take up the slain body of their Edmund, where it lay cast forth in the village of Hoxne; seek out the severed head and reverently reunite the same. They embalmed him with myrrh and sweet spices, with love, pity, and all high and awful thoughts; consecrating him with a very storm of melodious, adoring admiration, and sundried showers of tears; joyfully, yet with awe (as all deep joy has something of the awful in it), commemorating his noble deeds and godlike walk and conversation while on Earth. Till, at length, the very Pope and Cardinals at Rome were forced to hear of it; and they, summing up as correctly as they well could, with *Advocatus Diaboli* pleadings and other forms of process, the general verdict of mankind, declared that he had in very fact led a hero's life in this world; and, being now gone, was gone, as they conceived, to God



above and reaping his reward there. Such, they said, was the best judgment they could form of the case, and truly not a bad judgment.

24. Carlyle's reverence for the past makes him even more apt to be touched by its sorrows than amused by its follies. With a sense of brotherhood he holds out hands to all that were weary; he feels even for the pedlars climbing the Hohenzollern valley, and pities the solitude of soul on the frozen Shreckhorn of power, whether in a dictator of Paraguay or in a Prussian prince. He leads us to the death chamber of Louis XV., of Mirabeau, of Cromwell, of Sterling, his own lost friend; and we feel with him in the presence of a solemnising mystery. Constantly, amid the din of arms or words, and the sarcasms by which he satirises and contemns old follies and idle strifes, a gentler feeling wells up in his pages like the sound of the Angelus. Such pauses of pathos are the records of real or fanciful situations, as of 'Teafelsdröckh "left alone with the night" when Blumine and Herr Towgood ride down the valley; of Oliver recalling the old days at St. Ives; of the Electress Louisa bidding adieu to her Elector.

At the moment of her death, it is said, when speech had fled, he felt from her hand, which lay in his, three slight slight pressures—farewell thrice mutely spoken in that manner, not easily to forget in this world.

25. There is nothing more pathetic in the range of his works, if in that of our literature, than the account of the relations of father and son in the domestic history of the Prussian Court, from the first estrangement between them—the young Freidrich in his prison at Cüstrin, the old Friedrich gliding about seeking shelter from ghosts, mourning for Absalom—to the reconciliation, the end, and the afterthoughts:

The last breath of Friedrich Wilhelm having fled, Friedrich hurried to a private room; sat there all in tears; looking back through the gulfs of the Past, upon such a Father now rapt away for ever. Sad all and soft in the moonlight of memory—the lost Loved One all in the right as we now see, we all in the wrong!—This, it appears, was the Son's fixed opinion. Seven years hence, here is how Friedrich concludes the *History* of his Father, written with a loyal admiration throughout: 'We have left under silence the domestic chagrins of this great Prince; readers must have some indulgence for the faults of the children, in consideration of the virtues of such a Father.' All in tears he sits at present, meditating these sad things. In a little while the Old Dessauer, about to leave for Dessau, ventures in to the Crown Prince, Crown Prince no longer; 'embraces his knees,' offers weeping his condolence, his congratulation; hopes withal that his sons and he will be continued in their old posts, and that he the Old Dessauer 'will have the same authority as in the late reign.'



Friedrich's eyes, at this last clause, flash out tearless, strangely Olympian. 'In your posts I have no thought of making change; in your posts yes; and as to authority I know of none there can be but what resides in the king that is sovereign,' which, as it were, struck the breath out of the Old Dessauer; and sent him home with a painful miscellany of feelings, astonishment not wanting among them. At an after hour the same night Friedrich went to Berlin, met by acclamation enough. He slept there not without tumult of dreams, one may fancy; and on awakening next morning the first sound he heard was that of the regiment *glasenap* under his windows, swearing fealty to the new King. He sprang out of bed in a tempest of emotion; bustled distractedly to and fro, wildly weeping. Pöllnitz, who came into the anteroom, found him in this state, 'half-dressed, with dishevelled hair, in tears, and as if beside himself.' 'These huzzahings only tell me what I have lost,' said the new King. 'He was in great suffering,' suggested Pöllnitz; 'he is now at rest.' True, he suffered; but he was here with us; and now——!

26. Carlyle has said of Dante's *Francesca* "that it is a thing woven as of rainbows on a ground of eternal black." The phrase, well applied to the *Inferno*, is a perhaps half-conscious verdict on his own tenderness as exhibited in his life and in his works.....

27. Carlyle seems to have known little of Aristotle. His Stoicism was indigenous; but he always alludes with deference to the teaching of the Porch. Marcus Aurelius, the nearest type of the Philosophic King, must have riveted his regard as an instance of the combination of thought and action; and some interesting parallels have been drawn between their views of life as an arena on which there is much to be done and little to be known, a passage from time to a vague eternity. They have the same mystical vein, alongside of similar precepts of self-forgetfulness, abnegation, and the waiving of desire, the same confidence in the power of the spirit to defy or disdain vicissitudes—ideas which brought both in touch with the ethical side of Christianity;—but their tempers and manner are as far as possible apart. Carlyle speaks of no one with more admiration than of Dante, recognising in the Italian his own intensity of love and hate and his own tenacity; but beyond this there is little evidence of the "*Divina Commedia*" having seriously attuned his thought: nor does he seem to have been much affected by any of the elder English poets. He scarcely refers to Chaucer; he alludes to Spenser here and there with some homage, but hardly ever, excepting Shakespeare, to the Elizabethan dramatists.

28. Among writers of the seventeenth century, he may have found in Hobbes some support of his advocacy of a



strong government; but his views on this theme came rather from a study of the history of that age. Milton he appreciates inadequately. To Dryden and Swift he is just; the latter, whether consciously to Carlyle or not, was in some respects his English master, and the points of resemblance in their characters suggest detailed examination. Their styles are utterly opposed, that of the one resting almost wholly on its Saxon base, that of the other being a coat of many colours; but both are, in the front rank of masters of prose-satire, inspired by the same audacity of "noble rage." Swift's humour has a subtler touch and yet more scathing scorn; his contempt of mankind was more real; his pathos equally genuine but more withdrawn; and if a worse foe he was a better friend. The comparisons already made between Johnson and Carlyle have exhausted the theme; they remain associated by their similar struggle and final victory, and sometimes by their tyrannous use of power; they are dissociated by the divergence of their intellectual and in some respects even their moral natures; both were forces of character rather than discoverers, both rulers of debate; but the one was of sense, the other of imagination, "all compact." The one blew "the blast of doom" of the old patronage; the other, against heavier odds, contended against the later tyranny of uninformed and insolent popular opinion. Carlyle did not escape wholly from the influence of the most infectious, if the most morbid, of French writers, J. J. Rousseau. They are alike in setting Emotion over Reason: in referring to the Past as a model; in subordinating mere criticism to ethical, religious or irreligious purpose; in being avowed propagandists; in their "deep unrest"; and in the diverse conclusions that have been drawn from their teaching.

29. Carlyle's enthusiasm for the leaders of the new German literature was, in some measure, inspired by the pride in a treasure-trove, the regard of a foster-father or *chaperon* who first substantially took it by the hand and introduced it to English society: but it was also due to the feeling that he had found in it the fullest expression of his own perplexities, and at least their partial solution. His choice of its representatives is easily explained. In Schiller he found intellectually a younger brother, who had fought a part of his own fight and animated by his own aspirations; in dealing with his career and works there is a shade of patronage. Goethe, on the other hand, he recognised across many divergencies as his master. The attachment of the belated Scotch Puritan to the greater German has provoked endless comment; but the former has himself



solved the riddle. The contrasts between the teacher and pupil remain, but they have been exaggerated by those who only knew Goethe as one who had attained, and ignored the struggle of his hot youth on the way to attainment. Carlyle justly commands him, not alone for his artistic mastery, but for his sense of the reality and earnestness of life, which lifts him to a higher grade among the rulers of human thought than such more perfect artists and more passionate lyrists as Heine. He admires above all his conquest over the world, without concession to it, saying:—

With him Anarchy has now become Peace. . . . the once perturbed spirit is serene and rich in good fruits. . . . Neither, which is most important of all, has this Peace been attained by a surrender to Necessity, or any compact with delusion—a seeming blessing, such as years and dispiritment will of themselves bring to most men, and which is indeed no blessing, since ever-continued battle is better than captivity. Many gird on the harness, few bear it warrior-like, still fewer put it off with triumph. Euphorian still asserts, ‘To die in strife is the end of life.’

30. Goethe only ceased to fight when he had won; his want of sympathy with the so-called Apostles of Freedom, the stump orators of his day, was genuine and shared by Carlyle. In the apologue of the *Three Reverences* in *Meister* the master indulges in humanitarian rhapsody and, unlike his pupil, verges on sentimental paradox, declaring through the lips of the Chief in that imaginary pedagogic province—which here and there closely recalls the *New Atlantis*—that we must recognise “humility and poverty, mockery and despite, disgrace and suffering, as divine—nay, even on sin and crime to look not as hindrances, but to honour them, as furtherances of what is holy.” . . .

31. Among German so-called mystics the one most nearly in accord with Carlyle was Novelis, who has left a sheaf of sayings—as “There is but one temple in the universe, and that is the body of man,” “Who touches a human hand touches God”—that especially commended themselves to his commentator. Among philosophers proper, Fichte, in his assertion of the Will as a greater factor of human life and a nearer indication of personality than pure Thought, was Carlyle’s nearest tutor. *The Vocation of the Scholar* and *The Way to a Blessed Life* anticipated and probably suggested much of the more speculative part of *Sartor*. But to show their relation would involve a course of metaphysics.

32. We accept Carlyle’s statement that he learnt most of the secret of life and its aims from his master Goethe: but the



closest of his kin, the man with whom he shook hands more nearly as an equal, was Richter—*Jean Paul der einzige*, lord of the empire of the air, yet with feet firmly planted on German earth, a colossus of reading and industry, the quaintest of humorists, not excepting either Sir Thomas Browne or Laurence Sterne, a lover and painter of Nature unsurpassed in prose. He first seems to have influenced his translator's style, and said to him the mode of queer titles and contortions, fantastic imaginary incidence, and endless digressions. His Ezekiel visions as the dream in the first *Flower Piece* from the life of Siebenkäs, and that on *New Year's Eve*, are like pre-visions of *Sartor*, and we find in the fantasies of both authors much of the same machinery. It has been asserted that whole pages of *Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz* might pass current for Carlyle's own; and it is evident that the latter was saturated with *Quintus Fixlein*. The following can hardly be a mere coincidence. Richter writes of a dead brother, "For he chanced to leap on an ice-board that had jammed itself among several others; but these recoiled, and his shot forth with him, melted away as it floated under his feet, and so sank his heart of fire amid the eyes and waves"; while in *Cui Bono* we have—

What is life? a thawing ice-board  
On a sea with sunny shore.

Similarly, the eloquently pathetic close of *Fixlein*, especially the passage, "Then began the Æolian harp of Creation," recalls the deepest pathos of *Sartor*. The two writers, it has been observed, had in common "reverence, humour, vehemence, tenderness, gorgeousness, grotesqueness, and pure conduct of life." Much of Carlyle's article in the *Foreign Quarterly* of 1830 might be taken for a criticism of himself....

33. The general verdict on Carlyle's literary career assigns to him the first place among the authors of his time. No writer of our generation, in or out of England, has combined such abundance with such power. Regarding his rank as a writer there is little or no dispute: it is admitted that the irregularities and eccentricities of his style are bound up with its richness. In estimating the value of his thought we must distinguish between instruction and inspiration. If we ask what new truths he has taught, what problems he has definitely solved, our answers must be few. This is a perhaps inevitable result of the manner of his writing, or rather of the nature of his mind. Aside from political parties, he helped to check their exaggerations by his own; seeing deeply into



the under-current evils of the time, even when vague in his remedies he was of use in his protest against leaving these evils to adjust themselves—what has been called “the policy of drifting”—or of dealing with them only by catchwords. No one set a more incisive brand on the meanness that often marks the unrestrained competition of great cities; no one was more effective in his insistence that the mere accumulation of wealth may mean the ruin of true prosperity; no one has assailed with such force the mammon-worship and the frivolity of his age. Everything he writes comes home to the individual conscience: his claim to be regarded as a moral exemplar has been diminished, his hold on us as an ethical teacher remains unrelaxed. It has been justly observed that he helped to modify “the thought rather than the opinion of two generations.” His message, as that of Emerson, was that “life must be pitched on higher plane.” Goethe said to Eckermann in 1827 that Carlyle was a moral force so great that he could not tell what he might produce. His influence has been, though not continuously progressive, more marked than that of any of his compeers, among whom he was if not the greatest, certainly the most imposing personality. It had two culminations; shortly after the appearance of *The French Revolution*, and again towards the close of the seventh decade of the author’s life. To the enthusiastic reception of his works in the universities, Mr. Froude has borne eloquent testimony, and the more academically restrained Arnold admits that “the voice of Carlyle, overstrained and misused since, sounded then in Oxford fresh and comparatively sound,” though, he adds, “the friends of one’s youth cannot always support a return to them.” In the striking article in the *St. James’ Gazette* of the date of the great author’s death we read: “One who had seen much of the world and knew a large proportion of the remarkable men of the last thirty years declared that Mr. Carlyle was by far the most impressive person he had ever known, the man who conveyed most forcibly to those who approached him [best on resistance principles] that general impression of genius and force of character which it is impossible either to mistake or to define.” Thackeray, as well as Ruskin and Froude, acknowledged him as, beyond the range of his own *métier*, his master, and the American Lowell, penitent for past disparagement, confesses that “all modern Literature has felt his influence in the right direction”; while the Emersonian hermit Thoreau, a man of more intense though more restricted genius than the poet-politician, declares—“Carlyle alone with his wide humanity has, since Coleridge, kept to us the promise



of England. His wisdom provokes rather than informs. He blows down narrow walls, and struggles, in a lurid light, like the Jöthuns, to throw the old woman Time; in his work there is too much of the anvil and the forge, not enough hay-making under the sun. He makes us act rather than think: he does not say, know thyself, which is impossible, but know thy work. He has no pillars of Hercules, no clear goal, but an endless Atlantic horizon. He exaggerates. Yes; but he makes the hour great, the picture bright, the reverence and admiration strong; while mere precise fact is a coil of lead." Our leading journal on the morning after Carlyle's death wrote of him in a tone of well-tempered appreciation: "We have had no such individuality since Johnson. Whether men agreed or not, he was a touchstone to which truth and falsehood were brought to be tried. A preacher of Doric thought, always in his pulpit and audible, he denounced wealth without sympathy, equality without respect, mobs without leaders, and life without aim." To this we may add the testimony of another high authority in English letters, politically at the opposite pole: "Carlyle's influence in kindling enthusiasm for virtues worthy of it, and in stirring a sense of the reality on the one hand and the unreality on the other, of all that men can do and suffer, has not been surpassed by any teacher now living. Whatever later teachers may have done in definitely shaping opinion . . . here is the friendly fire-bearer who first conveyed the Promethean spark; here the prophet who first smote the rock." Carlyle, writes one of his oldest friends, "may be linked to a fugleman; he stood up in the front of Life's Battle and showed in word and action his notion of the proper attitude and action of men. He was, in truth, a prophet, and he has left his gospels." To those who contest that these gospels are for the most part negative, we may reply that to be taught what not to do is to be far advanced on the way to do.

34. In nothing is the generation after him so prone to be unjust to a fresh thinker as with regard to his originality. A physical discovery, as Newton's, remains to ninety-nine out of a hundred a mental miracle; but a great moral teacher "labours to make himself forgotten." When he begins to speak he is suspected of insanity; when he has won his way he receives a Royal Commission to appoint the judges; as a veteran he is shelved for platitude. So Horace is regarded as a mere jewelry store of the Latin, Bacon, in his *Essays*, of the English, wisdom, which they each in fact helped to create. Carlyle's paradoxes have been exaggerated, his partialities intensified, in his followers; his critical readers, not his disciples, have



learnt most from him; he has helped across the Slough of Despond only those who have also helped themselves. When all is said of his dogmatism, his petulance, his "evil behaviour," he remains the master spirit of his time, its Censor, as Macaulay is its Panegyrist, and Tennyson its Mirror. He has saturated his nation with a wholesome tonic, and the practice of any one of his precepts for the conduct of life is ennobling. More intense than Wordsworth, more intelligible than Browning, more fervid than Mill, he has indicated the pitfalls in our civilisation. His works have done much to mould the best thinkers into continents, in both of which he has been the Greatheart to many pilgrims. Not a few could speak in the words of the friend whose memory he has so affectionately preserved, "Towards me it is still more true than towards England that no one has been and done like you." A champion of ancient virtue, he appeared in his own phrase applied to Fichte, as "a Cato Major among degenerate men." Carlyle had more than the shortcomings of a Cato; he had all the inconsistent vehemence of an imperfectly balanced mind; but he had a far wider range and deeper sympathies. The message of the modern preacher transcended all mere applications of the text *delenda est*. He denounced, but at the same time nobly exhorted, his age. A storm-tossed spirit, "tempest-buffed," he was "citadel-crowned" in his unflinching purpose and the might of an invincible will.—*Nichol's "Carlyle": English Men of Letters Series.*

#### IV. Analysis of the "Divina Commedia."

[From *Sismondi's Literature of the South of Europe*: Roscoe's Translation.]

1. At the close of the century, in the year 1300, and in the week of Easter, Dante supposes himself to be wandering in the deserts near Jerusalem, and to be favoured with the means of access to the realm of shadows. He is there met by Virgil, the object of his incessant study and admiration, who takes upon himself the office of guide, and who, by his own admirable description of the heathen hell, seems to have acquired a kind of right to reveal the mysteries of these forbidden regions. The two bards arrive at a gate, on which are inscribed these terrific words:—

"Through me you pass into the city of woe:  
Through me you pass into eternal pain:  
Through me, among the people lost for aye.  
Justice the founder of my fabric mov'd:



To rear me was the task of power divine,  
Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.\*  
Before me things create were none, save things  
Eternal, and eternal I endure.  
All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

2. By the decree of the Most High, the companions are, however, enabled to pass the gates of hell, and to penetrate into the dismal sojourn.

Here sighs, with lamentations and loud moans,  
Resounded through the air, pierc'd by no star,  
That e'en I wept at entering. Various tongues,  
Horrible languages, outcries of woe,  
Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse,  
With hands together smote that swelled the sounds,  
Made up a tumult, that for ever whirls  
Round through that air, with solid darkness stain'd,  
Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies.

3. Notwithstanding their afflictions, these sufferers were not such as had been positively wicked, but such as, if they had lived without infamy, had yet no claims to virtue.

"This miserable fate  
Suffer the wretched souls of those, who liv'd  
Without or praise or blame, with that ill band  
Of angels mix'd, who nor rebellious prov'd,  
Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves  
Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove them forth,  
Not to impair his lustre; nor the depth  
Of Hell receives them, lest th' accursed tribe  
Should glory thence with exultation vain."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Fame of them the world hath none,  
Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them both.  
Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by."

4. Leaving this ignoble multitude, the poets arrive at the gloomy banks of Acheron, where are assembled, from every part of the earth, such as have died in the displeasure of God. Divine justice pursues their steps, and terror, more powerful than desire, hurries them on. The reprobate souls are transported across the melancholy waters, in the boat of Charon; for Dante, in common with many fathers of the church, under the supposition that paganism, in the person of its infernal Gods, represented the evil angels, made no scruple to adopt its fables. He thus blended with the terrors of the catholic

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\* The three persons of the blessed Trinity. The English versions of the extracts from Dante, are taken from Cary's Translation.



faith, all the brilliant colouring of the Greek mythology, and all the force of poetical association. In his picture of the Last Judgment, Michael Angelo drew from Dante his ideas of hell. We there see Charon carrying over the condemned souls; and forgetting that he is introduced, not as an infernal God, but as the evil spirit of the stream, it has been objected to the painter of the Sistine Chapel, that he has confounded the two religions, when, in fact, he has not transgressed the strict faith of the church.

5. The poets, proceeding into the depths of the regions of darkness, arrive at the abode of the wise and just of antiquity, who having been necessarily precluded, in their lives, from receiving the benefits of baptism, are condemned by the catholic creed, to eternal pains. Their tears and groans are extorted, not by actual tortures, but by their eternal sense of the want of that bliss which they are destined never to attain. Their habitation is not unlike the shadowy Elysium of the poets, and affords a kind of fainter picture of earthly existence, where the place of hope is occupied by regret. We may here observe, that M. de Chateaubriand, after having expressed an inclination to exempt virtuous heathens from eternal punishment, has since experienced some scruples of conscience; and in the third edition of his *Martyrs*, has penitently retracted a sentiment so pure, so benevolent, and so consistent with every attribute of a God of infinite goodness.

6. After surveying the heroes of antiquity, Dante, in his descent into the abyss, next encounters those whom love seduced into crime, and who died before they had repented of their sin; for the distinction between Hell and Purgatory does not consist in the magnitude of the offence, but in the circumstances of the last moments of the offender. The first reprobate shades with which Dante meets, are treated with the greatest share of indulgence, and the punishments become more intense, in proportion as he penetrates deeper into the bosom of hell.

Into a place I came  
Where light was silent all. Bellowing, there groan'd  
A noise, as of a sea in tempest torn  
By warring winds. The stormy blast of hell  
With restless fury drives the spirits on,  
Whirl'd round and dash'd amain, with sore annoy.

7. In the midst of this unhappy throng, Dante recognises Francesca di Rimini, daughter of Guido da Polenta, one of his patrons, who became the wife of Lancillotto Malatesti and being detected in an adulterous intrigue with Paolo, her



brother-in-law, was put to death by her husband. The reputation of this striking episode has made it familiar to every language; but the beauty and finished harmony of the original remain without a rival :

“ Bard ! willingly  
I would address those two together coming,  
Which seem so light before the wind.” He thus :  
“ Note thou, when nearer they to us approach.  
Then by that love which carries them along,  
Entreat ; and they will come.” Soon as the wind  
Sway’d them toward us, I thus fram’d my speech :  
“ O wearied spirits ! come, and hold discourse  
With us, if by none else restrain’d.” As doves  
By fond desire invited, on wide wings  
And firm, to their sweet nest returning home,  
Cleave the air, wafted by their will along ;  
Thus issu’d, from that troop where Dido ranks,  
They, through the ill air speeding ; with such force  
My cry prevail’d, by strong affection urg’d.

“ O gracious creature and benign ! who go’st  
Visiting, through this element obscure,  
Us, who the world with bloody stain imbru’d ;  
If, for a friend, the King of all, we own’d,  
Our pray’r to him should for thy peace arise,  
Since thou hast pity on our evil plight.  
Of whatsoe’er to hear or to discourse  
It pleases thee, that will we hear, of that  
Freely with thee discourse, while e’er the wind,  
As now, is mute. The land, that gave me birth,  
Is situate on the coast, where Po descends  
To rest in ocean with his sequent streams.

“ Love, that in gentle heart is quickly learnt,  
Entangled him by that fair form, from me  
Ta’en in such cruel sort, as grieves me still :  
Love, that denial takes from none belov’d,  
Caught me with pleasing him so passing well,  
That, as thou see’st, he yet deserts me not.  
Love brought us to one death : Cainawaits  
The soul, who spilt our life.”

After a pause, Dante exclaims :

“ Alas ! by what sweet thoughts, what fond desire  
Must they at length to that ill pass have reach’d !”

Then turning, I to them my speech address’d,  
And thus began : “ Francesca ! your sad fate  
Even to tears my grief and pity moves.  
But tell me ; in the time of your sweet sighs,  
By what, and how Love granted, that ye knew  
Your yet uncertain wishes ?” She replied :



"No greater grief than to remember days  
 Of joy, when mis'ry is at hand. That kens  
 Thy learn'd instructor. Yet so eagerly  
 If thou art bent to know the primal root,  
 From whence our love gat being, I will do  
 As one, who weeps and tells his tale. One day,  
 For our delight we read of Lancelot,  
 How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no  
 Suspicion near us. Oft times by that reading  
 Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue  
 Fled from our alter'd cheek. But at one point  
 Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,  
 The wished smile, so rapturously kiss'd  
 By one so deep in love, then he, who ne'er  
 From me shall separate, at once my lips  
 All trembling kiss'd. The book and writer both  
 Were love's purveyors.\* In its leaves that day  
 We read no more." While thus one spirit spake,  
 The other wail'd so sorely, that heart-struck  
 I, through compassion fainting, seem'd not far  
 From death, and like a corse fell to the ground.

8. In the third circle of Hell, whose capacious gulf is divided into seven concentric circles, Dante finds those who are punished for their gluttony. Extended upon the fetid mire, these wretches are eternally exposed to showers of ice. The poet is recognised by one of them, and receives from him tidings of several of his countrymen. The opposite vices of avarice and prodigality suffer a common punishment, in the fourth circle; the inhabitants of which attack each other with mutual reproaches. A disgusting slough swallows up those who have abandoned themselves to their choleric passions; and the heresiarchs have a place reserved for them, within the precincts of the city of Pluto. A number of tombs are scattered over a wide plain, partially open, and glowing like a heated furnace. From these, over which the coverings remain suspended, the most dreadful shrieks proceed. As he passes by one of the tombs, Dante is thus saluted by its tenant:

"O Tuscan! thou, who through the city of fire  
 Alive art passing, so discreet of speech;  
 Here, please thee, stay awhile. Thy utterance  
 Declares the place of thy nativity  
 To be that noble land, with which, perchance,  
 I too severely dealt."

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\* She refers to the seducer by the name of Gallehault, a friend of Lancelot, and the love of one of the ladies of Genievre, who countenanced their passion.



9. The person who thus addresses him from the midst of the flames, proves to be Farinata de' Uberti, the chief of the Ghibeline faction at Florence, who triumphed over the Guelphs at the battle of Arbia, and saved his country, which the Ghibelines were about to sacrifice, to secure their own safety. Farinata was one of those great characters, of which antiquity, or the middle ages, alone, afford us any example. Controlling, with the hand of a master, the course of events, as well as the minds of men, destiny itself seems to submit to his will, and the very torments of hell are insufficient to disturb the haughty tranquillity of his spirit. He is admirably portrayed in the conversation which Dante has assigned to him. Every passion is concentrated in his attachment to his country and his party; and the exile of the Ghibelines inflicts upon him far greater torments than the burning couch upon which he is reposing.

10. On descending into the seventh circle, Dante perceives a vast pool of blood, into which tyrants and homicides are plunged. Centaurs, armed with darts, traverse its margin, and compel the wretches, who raise their heads above the surface, to hide them again in the bloody stream. Proceeding farther, he finds those who have committed suicide, suffering transformation into the shape of trees, and retaining nothing of their human character but the power of speech, and the sense of pain. As a punishment for having once turned their hands against themselves, they are deprived of all capacity of action. On a plain of scorching sand, and exposed to showers of fire, the poet finds a company of shades, whose disgraceful vices had incurred this penalty; but who, in many respects, were entitled to his affection and respect. Among these, he distinguishes Brunetto Latino, his instructor in eloquence and poetry; Guido Guerra, Jacopo Rusticucci, and Tegghaio Aldobrandi, the most virtuous and disinterested republicans of Florence, in the preceding century. Dante observes :

If from the fire  
I had been shelter'd, down amidst them straight  
I then had cast me; nor my guide, I deem,  
Would have restrain'd my going: but that fear  
Of the dire burning vanquish'd the desire,  
Which made me eager of their wish'd embrace.  
I then began :———  
“I am a countryman of yours, who still  
Affectionate have utter'd, and have heard,  
Your deeds and names renown'd.”

11. He proceeds to give them some intelligence of the



affairs of Florence, in whose prosperity these victims of eternal torture still continue to take the deepest interest.

12. It is not our design to follow the steps of the poet from circle to circle, from gulf to "lower gulf." To render the description of these terrible scenes at all supportable, we must call to our aid the magical powers of style, and of verse; that vehement and picturesque genius, which places distinctly before our eyes the new world, summoned into being at the will of the poet. Above all, we cannot dispense with that interest in the personages introduced upon the scene, of which Dante availed himself, when, in anticipation of the Divine judgments, he described individuals well known to his fellow-citizens by their vices, and by the recent consequences of their crimes, as inhabiting the various mansions of hell, recognizing the Florentine bard, and losing, for a moment, the sense of their own agonies, in the remembrance of their country and their friends.

13. As this great work does not possess any regular action, and derives no support from the enthusiasm of human passion, it is impossible to take any lively interest in the hero of the story; if, indeed, Dante is not to be considered rather as the mere spectator of the pictures conjured up by his imagination, than as the hero of his own tale. It cannot, however, be said that the poem is altogether divested of dramatic interest. Unassisted and alone, we see Dante advance into the midst of demons and condemned souls. The Divine will has, it is true, opened to him the gates of Hell; and Virgil, who bears the mandate of Omnipotence, attends his steps. But the demons are not the less active in opposing, with their utmost malignity, the superior decrees of fate. At one time, they violently close the gates of Hell upon him; at another, they rush towards him, with the design of tearing him in pieces. They receive him with false information, and endeavour to lead him astray in the infernal labyrinth. We are sufficiently absorbed in his narrative, to feel interested in the dangers to which he is perpetually exposed; and the truth of his descriptions, added to the deep horror inspired by the objects which he depicts, seldom fails to make a strong and painful impression on the mind. Thus, in the twenty-fifth canto, we shudder at the tortures, which he supposes to be inflicted upon robbers. These miserable offenders inhabit a valley, filled with horrible serpents. Before the very face of Dante, one of these monsters springs upon Agnolo Brunelleschi, envelopes him in its folds, and pours its poisonous foam over his features. The two bodies soon appear to blend into one; the distinction of colours disappears; the limbs undergo a



gradual change; and when they are disengaged, Brunelleschi is transformed into a snake, and Cianfa, who had attacked him, recovers the human shape. Immediately after, Buoso de' Abbati is wounded by another serpent, which relinquishes its hold, and stretches itself out at his feet. Buoso fixes his eyes upon it, but cannot utter a word. He staggers and gasps, as if overpowered by lethargy or fever. The eyes of the man and of the reptile are steadfastly fixed on each other. From the wound of the former and the mouth of the latter, thick volumes of smoke proceed, and as soon as these unite, the nature of the two beings is changed. Arms are seen to issue from the body of the serpent, while the limbs of the man contract and disappear under the scaly figure of his adversary. While one erects himself, the other grovels upon the earth; and the two accursed souls, who have interchanged their punishments, separate with mutual execrations.

14. The general conception of this unknown world, which Dante has revealed to our eyes, is, considered in itself, full of grandeur and sublimity. The existence of the three kingdoms of the dead, in which the sufferings, at least, were all of a physical nature, and to which the language of scripture and of the fathers was always literally applied, was a point of faith which, at the time when the poet flourished, admitted of no dispute. The creed of the church had not, however, fixed, with exact precision, the different abodes of departed spirits, and it was difficult to form an idea of the separation as well as of the degree of rewards and punishments. The future state described by the poets of antiquity is confused, and almost incomprehensible. That of Dante, on the contrary, strikes the imagination by the order, regularity, and grandeur with which it is depicted. It is impossible, when once impressed with his conceptions, to figure his scenes to our fancy in any other form. A horrible abyss occupies the interior of our earth. The declivity is not uniform, but broken, as it were, into steps, and terminates in the centre of the globe. This is the kingly station of Lucifer, the despotic ruler of these realms of pain, who waves his six gigantic wings over a frozen ocean, in which he is half submerged, and is at once the servant and the victim of Almighty vengeance. Like him, the other spirits of darkness who espoused his cause, are incessantly employed in exercising their diabolical malignity on the reprobate souls, whose agonies they inflict and partake. From the centre of the earth, a long cavern reconducts the poet to the light of day. It opens at the base of a mountain, situated on the opposite hemisphere. In figure, this mountain is the exact reverse of



the infernal regions. It forms an immense cone, divided into distinct departments, in which are distributed those souls who are undergoing the judgments of purgatory. Its avenues are guarded by angels; and whenever they permit a purified soul to ascend into heaven, the whole mountain rings with the joyous thanksgivings of its remaining inhabitants. On its summit, is situated the terrestrial Paradise, which forms the communicating link between heaven and earth. The celestial regions constitute the third portion of this universe, ascending in spiral rings, from sphere to sphere, to the throne of Almighty power. The same unity of design is thus visible in the conception of the different worlds; upon which the genius of Dante has conferred a diversified symmetry, combining, at once, perfect consistency with perpetual novelty, and approaching to that which characterizes the works of the creation.

15. The Divine Comedy is divided into a hundred cantos, each containing from one hundred and thirty, to one hundred and forty verses. The first canto is intended as a kind of introduction to the whole work. Thirty-three cantos are then devoted to each of the three topics of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Proceeding with our rapid sketch, we shall not at present particularize the terrific punishments which the poet contemplates in the ocean of ice, swept by the wings of Lucifer. Dante issues from the abyss by placing himself upon the body of the fiend, and at the same time revolving round the centre of the earth, towards which all matter gravitates. His position is then changed, and he ascends by the path which appeared to him to be a declivity. Emerging to the light of day, in the opposite hemisphere, he discovers a vast ocean, in the midst of which is placed the steep mountain to which we have already alluded. After purifying himself from the infernal stains, Dante proceeds to attempt the spiral ascent, under the guidance of Virgil, who never forsakes his side. As he passes along, he sees the souls of the elect chastened by long and severe sufferings. But in the midst of their agonies, they are filled with holy raptures, having exchanged faith for certainty, and having always before their eyes those heavenly rewards, which they are destined at last to attain. The angels who guard the various districts of the mountain, or who visit it, in their robes of light, as messengers of the Supreme will, continually remind the sufferers that their temporary chastisement will be succeeded by the joys and the splendours of Paradise.

16. In this portion of the work, however, the interest is not equally supported. All apprehension of danger to the person



of the hero is at an end. He walks in safety with the guardian angels of the place. There is little novelty in the punishments; and, such as they are, they do not strike the imagination, after those which we have already witnessed. Our sympathy, too, for the persons introduced to our notice, begins to languish. Their present state of existence is rendered indifferent to them by the vivacity of their hopes; their recollections of the past are absorbed in the future; and, experiencing no vehement emotions themselves, they have little power to excite them in us. Nor did this defect escape the observation of the poet. He endeavours to repair it, by entering into philosophical and theological discussions, and by detailing all the learning of the schools on the most subtle questions of metaphysics. But his style of argument, which was respected as profound at the period when he wrote, produces a very different effect upon minds which do not allow the authority of the doctors to supersede that of reason. These disquisitions, moreover, are always at variance with true poetry, and weary the reader, by interrupting the progress of the action.

17. Some interest is, however, occasionally excited by those whom Dante here encounters. Thus, on his first entrance into Purgatory, we are affected by the tender friendship of the musician, Casella, who endeavours to throw himself into the poet's arms. A striking incident occurs, also, in the third canto, where he is accosted by Manfred, the natural son of Frederick, and the greatest prince who has filled the throne of the Two Sicilies. He enjoins Dante to seek his daughter Constance, wife of Peter the Third of Aragon, and mother of Frederick, the avenger of the Sicilians, for the purpose of satisfying her as to his doom, and dissipating the painful doubts which the Pope and the priesthood had excited. Not contented with persecuting him during his life, with defaming his character, and precipitating him from his throne, they took upon themselves to pronounce the sentence of his eternal damnation. His body was torn from the grave, and exposed on the banks of a river, as that of a rebellious and excommunicated son of the Church. Yet the Divinity, whose mercy is not as the mercy of man, had accepted him, pardoned him, and given him promise of an eternity of bliss; neither the maledictions of the priests, nor the imposing forms of excommunication, possessing power to deprive sinners of the benefits of infinite love. It was thus, that this singular poem might be said to convey tidings from parents to their children, and to afford grounds for hope, by giving, as it were, an authentic description of the state of the soul after dissolution.



18. In his sixth canto, Dante introduces us to the spirit of Sordello, the Troubadour of Mantua. We behold him solitary, haughty, and contemptuous. He is recognized by Virgil, and the conference which ensues between them gives occasion to a fine invective against Italy, one of the most eloquent passages in the Purgatory. To enter, however, fully into the feelings of the poet, we must bear in mind the political storms by which Italy was, at that time, devastated; the long anarchy of the Empire, which, in the middle of the thirteenth century, had broken all the bonds by which its component states had before been united; the ambition of the Popes, who were only eager to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the ancient temporal sovereigns of the state; and the turbulent passions of the citizens, who continually sacrificed the liberty of their country to the indulgence of their private revenge. To all these sources of indignation, we must add the personal situation of Dante, when exiled from Florence by the triumphant faction of his enemies, and compelled to fly for succour to the Emperors, who were then beginning to re-establish their authority in Germany, but were unable to direct their attention, in any considerable degree, to the affairs of Italy. The poet thus fervently apostrophizes his country:

Ah, slavish Italy! thou inn of grief!  
 Vessel, without a pilot, in loud storm!  
 Lady no longer of fair provinces,  
 But brothel-house impure! this gentle spirit,  
 Ev'n from the pleasant sound of his dear land,  
 Was prompt to greet a fellow-citizen  
 With such glad cheer: while now thy living ones  
 In thee abide not without war; and one  
 Malicious gnaws another; ay! of those  
 Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.  
 Seek, wretched one! around thy sea-coasts wide;  
 Then homeward to thy bosom turn; and mark,  
 If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy.  
 What boots it, that thy reins Justinian's hand  
 Refitted, if thy saddle be unpress'd?  
 Nought doth he now but aggravate thy shame.—  
 O German Albert! who abandon'st her  
 That is grown savage and unmanageable,  
 When thou should'st clasp her flanks with forked heels,  
 Just judgment from the stars fall on thy blood;  
 And be it strange and manifest to all;  
 Such as may strike thy successor with dread;  
 For that thy sire and thou have suffer'd thus,  
 Through greediness of yonder realms detain'd,  
 The garden of the empire to run waste.



19. After having rebuked the Emperor for permitting the discord of the Ghibeline chiefs, the oppression of his noble partizans, and the desolation of Rome, he appeals to Providence against the universal confusion, which seems to contradict the scheme of its benovolence. He concludes with an address, conceived in a spirit of the bitterest irony, to his native country, in which he reproaches her with her ambition, with that inconstant temper which induces her to make perpetual alterations in her laws, her coinage, and her civil offices, and with the ostentatious and affected display of those virtues which she has long ceased to practise.

20. In the twentieth canto, and in the fifth circle of Purgatory, where the sin of avarice is expiated, Dante meets with Hugh Capet, father of the king of that name; and in the conversation which takes place between them, the hatred which the poet entertains for the kings of France, who had extended their protection to his oppressors, and occasioned the downfall of his faction, is sufficiently manifest.

“I was root

Of that ill plant, whose shade such poison sheds  
O'er all the Christian land, that seldom thence  
Good fruit is gather'd. Vengeance soon should come,  
Had Ghent and Douay, Lille and Bruges power;  
And vengeance I of heav'n's great Judge implore.  
Hugh Capet was I hight: from me descend  
The Philips and the Louis, of whom France  
Newly is govern'd; born of one, who ply'd  
The slaughterer's trade at Paris. When the race  
Of ancient kings had vanish'd (all save one  
Wrapt up in sable weeds) within my gripe  
I found the reins of empire, and such powers  
Of new acquirement, with full store of friends,  
That soon the widow'd circlet of the crown  
Was girt upon the temples of my son,  
He, from whose bones th' anointed race begins.  
Till the great dower of Provence had remov'd  
The stains, that yet obscur'd our lowly blood,  
Its sway indeed was narrow; but howe'er  
It wrought no evil: there, with force and lies  
Began its rapine: after, for amends,  
Poitou it seiz'd, Navarre and Gascony.  
To Italy came Charles; and for amends,  
Young Conradine, an innocent victim, slew;  
And sent th' angelic teacher back to heaven,  
Still for amends. I see the time at hand,  
That forth from France invites another Charles  
To make himself and kindred better known.



Unarm'd he issues, saving with that lance,  
 Which the arch-traitor tilted with ; and that  
 He carries with so home a thrust, as rives  
 The bowels of poor Florence. No increase  
 Of territory hence, but sin and shame  
 Shall be his guerdon ; and so much the more  
 As he more lightly deems of such foul wrong.  
 I see the other (who a prisoner late  
 Had slept on shore), exposing to the mart  
 His daughter, whom he bargains for, as do  
 The Corsairs for their slaves, O Avarice !  
 What canst thou more, who hast subdu'd our blood  
 So wholly to thyself, they feel no care  
 Of their own flesh ? To hide with direr guilt  
 Past ill and future, lo ! the flower-de-luce  
 Enters Alagna ; in his Vicar, Christ  
 Himself a captive, and his mockery  
 Acted again. Lo ! to his holy lip  
 The vinegar and gall once more applied,  
 And he 'twixt living robbers doom'd to bleed."

21. The Purgatory of Dante is, in some respects, a fainter picture of the infernal regions. The same crimes are there corrected by punishments of a similar nature, but limited in their duration, inasmuch as the sinner gave proofs of penitence previous to his death. Dante has, however, introduced much less variety into the offences and the penal inflictions. After remaining a considerable time with those souls which linger at the outside of Purgatory, as a punishment for having deferred, in their lifetime, the period of their conversion, he proceeds in regular order through the seven mortal sins. The proud are overwhelmed with enormous weights ; the envious are clothed in garments of horsehair, and their eyelids are closed with an iron thread ; clouds of smoke suffocate the choleric ; the indolent are compelled to run without ceasing ; the avaricious are prostrated with their faces on the earth ; the cravings of hunger and thirst afflict the epicure ; and those who have given themselves up to incontinence, expiate their crime in fire. It will appear, from this slight sketch, that the scene of the Purgatory is more contracted, and its action more tardy ; and as Dante determined to make the Purgatory equal in length to the two other divisions of his work, the execution is perhaps necessarily languid. We find the cantos overloaded with visions and reveries, fatiguing to the reader, who looks forward with impatience to the termination of this mysterious excursion.

22. After having traversed the seven circles of Purgatory, Dante, in his twenty-eighth canto, reaches the terrestrial Pa-



radise, situated on the summit of the mountain. His description of this place is full of beauty, and all that can be objected to it is, that he has too frequently digressed into scholastic dissertations. In this earthly Paradise, Beatrice, the object of his earliest affection, descends from heaven to meet him. She appears as the minister of grace, and the organ of divine wisdom; and the passion which he entertains for her, exists only in the noblest sentiments and in the most elevated feelings. It is only as a manifestation of the goodness of God, that she presents herself to his thoughts, after her translation to the skies. In this view, she occupies the first place in his poem. From her, Virgil received his orders to escort the bard on his journey; by her influence, the gates of Hell were opened before him; her care removed every obstacle which opposed his progress; and her mandates are implicitly obeyed, throughout the three kingdoms of the dead. Such is the glory with which her lover surrounds her, that we are sometimes inclined to suspect that she is merely an allegorical character, and that the individual object of his affections is lost in a personification of theology. Whilst she is advancing towards him, and whilst, even before he has recognized her, he already trembles in her presence, from the power of his first love, Virgil, who had hitherto accompanied him, disappears. Beatrice reproves the early errors of the poet, and attempts to purify his heart; but her discourse is, perhaps, not altogether equal to the situation. As Dante approaches nearer to Heaven, he aims at something beyond the ordinary language of the world; and, in this attempt, he frequently becomes so obscure, that it is difficult to detect the beauties which still remain. To give us an idea of the language of Heaven, he borrows that of the church; and he intersperses such a number of Latin verses and hymns in his poetry, that the difference between the prosody, sound, and turn of expression of the two languages, arrests, at every moment, the attention of the reader.

23. In ascending into Heaven, Dante no longer avails himself of human machinery or human power; and he is, therefore, transported thither by fixing his eyes steadfastly on the sun, and by the mere vehemence of his spiritual aspirations. It is here difficult to understand him; and whilst we are endeavouring to discover the meaning of his enigmatical words, we cease to sympathise with his feelings and to accompany him on his way. In his account of the infernal world, there is nothing supernatural, which is not in strict accordance with our own nature. He only exaggerates those forces and those evils of which we have real experience. When he issues



from Purgatory and enters into Heaven, he presents us, on the contrary, with supernatural appearances like those of our wildest dreams. He supposes the existence of faculties, with which we have no acquaintance. He neither awakens our associations, nor revives our habits. We never thoroughly understand him ; and the perpetual state of astonishment in which we are placed, tends only to fatigue us.

24. The first abode of the blessed, is the heaven of the Moon, which revolves with the most tardy motion, and at the greatest distance from the glory of the Most High. Here inhabit the souls of such as, after having pronounced the vows of celibacy and religious seclusion, have been compelled to renounce them. But, although Dante distributes the beatified souls into distinct classes, their bliss, which is entirely of a contemplative nature, seems not to be susceptible of such a division. He represents one of those spirits as thus expressing himself :—

“ Brother ! our will  
Is, in composure, settled by the power  
Of charity, who makes us will alone  
What we possess, and nought beyond desire :  
If we should wish to be exalted more,  
Then must our wishes jar with the high will  
Of him who sets us here.”

25. This may be very true ; but the state of indifference, in which these souls exist, throws an air of coldness on the remainder of the poem ; the interest of which is still farther impaired by frequent theological disquisitions. All the doubts of Dante, on the union of the body and the soul, on the nature of vows, on free will, and on other intricate points, are readily solved by Beatrice ; but it is not so easy to satisfy the minds of his readers on these obscure topics. The most philosophical prose is not always successful on these subjects ; and we cannot, therefore, be surprised, if the poetical form of Dante's arguments, and the authority of Beatrice, to whose divine mission we are not always disposed to give implicit faith, throw still greater obscurity over questions, which are beyond all human comprehension.

26. We find very few descriptions in the Paradise of Dante. The great artist, whose sketches of the infernal realms possess such appalling sublimity, has not attempted to delineate the scenery of the skies. We leave the heaven of the Moon, with a very imperfect knowledge of its nature ; and our visit to that of Mercury is no less unsatisfactory. In each successive kingdom, however, the poet excites our curiosity, by assigning a prominent station to some character of distin-



guished celebrity. In the sixth canto, and in the second heaven, he is accosted by the Emperor Justinian, who is represented in a light as favourable as that in which the civilians have always delighted to view the great father of their science, and very different from that in which he is exhibited, with all his frailties and his vices, in the Secret History of Procopius.

27. In the third heaven, which is that of the planet Venus, Dante meets with Cunisa, the sister of Azzolino da Ramano, who forewarns him of the revolutions of the Marca Trivigiana. Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventura are found in the fourth heaven, which is placed in the Sun; and they narrate the glorified actions of Saint Dominick and Saint Francis. The souls of those who have combated for the true faith, are rewarded in the heaven of Mars. Amongst these, he observes his ancestor, Cacciaguida de' Elisei, who perished in the crusades; and from whom he receives an account of the early greatness of his own family. Cacciaguida proceeds to describe the ancient severity of manners maintained in Florence, in the time of Conrad the Third, and gives a catalogue, with a few characteristic remarks, of the noble houses which then flourished; of those which had, in later times, fallen into decay, and of those which had more recently risen to distinction. He then predicts to Dante his approaching exile:

"Thou shalt leave each thing  
Belov'd most dearly: this is the first shaft  
Shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt prove  
How salt the savour is of others' bread;  
How hard the passage, to descend and climb  
By others' stairs. But that shall gall the most,  
Will be the worthless and vile company,  
With whom thou must be thrown into these straits."

28. Cacciaguida then encourages Dante to disclose to the world all that he has witnessed in the realm of shadows, and to elevate his mind above the unworthy apprehension of giving offence to those, who might deem themselves disgraced by his narrations.

29. The sixth heaven is that of Jupiter, in which those who have administered justice with impartiality, receive their reward. The seventh is in Saturn, and contains such as devoted themselves to a life of contemplation or seclusion. In the eighth heaven, Dante beholds the triumph of Christ, which is attended by a host of beatified souls and by the Virgin Mary herself. He is then examined by Saint Peter in point of faith, by Saint James in hope, and by Saint John



in charity, from all of whom he obtains honourable testimonials of their approbation. Adam, also, here informs him what language was spoken in the terrestrial Paradise.

30. The poet then ascends into the ninth sphere, where he is favoured with a manifestation of the Divine Essence, which is, however, veiled by three hierarchies of surrounding angels. The Virgin Mary, and the Saints of the Old and New Testament, are also visible to him in the tenth heaven. All his doubts are finally resolved by the saints or by the Deity himself; and this great work concludes with a contemplation of the union of the two natures in the Divine Being.

### V. Biographical Notice of Dante.

Alighieri Dante, or Durante (1265—1321), the most distinguished of Italian poets, in early life served his country both as a soldier and a politician. He became one of the *priori* or chief magistrates of his native city of Florence about 1300, when the contentions of the two factions of the Bianchi and the Neri were at their height. He joined the former, which, being the weakest, was overcome in the struggle, and Dante falling with his party, was banished, and his property confiscated. For many years he was doomed to bear the sorrows of an exile. At length he was taken under the protection of Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna, under whose roof he passed the remainder of his days.—It was during his exile that Dante wrote his poem, of world-wide fame, "*La Divina Commedia*." It comprises three poems, or distinct acts—*Hell*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*. The poet, describing the fate of souls after "shuffling off this mortal coil," places in hell and purgatory all those who are remarkable either for their crimes or vices (especially those who were the authors of his misfortunes), and in paradise those who have done good deeds on earth. He is supposed, in company with Virgil, to descend to the infernal regions, and there describe the various punishments of sinners, whilst Beatrice, his first-loved earthly companion, leads him through the delights of paradise. This extraordinary composition is one of the most sublime productions which have ever emanated from the genius of man, although many passages are full of extravagances, and others, from their peculiar allusions, are very obscure. "*La Commedia*" was the first poem ever written in the Italian language; before it, the Latin tongue was always employed. This poem has found in all countries a host of editors, commentators, and translators. Dante also wrote some works in Latin, particularly one on Monarchy, and



another, "De Vulgari Eloquentiâ." It is, however, on his "Divina Commedia" that his fame securely rests. A monument was erected to his memory in the church of Santo Croce, in Florence, and opened to public view on the 24th of March, 1830. This tardy justice to the memory of a great poet, by his countrymen, may have been stimulated by the reproving lines of Byron, in the 4th canto of "Childe Harold," beginning—

"Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar!"





# NOTES.

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## Page 1.

*The Hero as Divinity, &c.* Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship" consists of six lectures, of which "The Hero as Divinity" and "The Hero as Prophet" are the first and second respectively, and "The Hero as Poet," the third. The remaining three treat of the Hero as Priest, Man of Letters, and King, respectively.

2. *Productions of old ages*, came to be considered as such only during ancient times, when people were rude and uncultured, and therefore naturally disposed to defy or venerate persons who greatly excelled in intellectual endowments and acquirements.

3. *Presuppose*, take it for granted that there exists. *Rudeness of conception*, an undeveloped state of the intellectual faculties. Carlyle means that it is only in a rude age, when the intellectual faculties of people are very imperfectly developed that they elevate a man of extraordinary gifts or acquirements to the dignity of a god or a prophet.

6. *Vacant of*, not containing any. *Scientific forms*, ideas of scientific truths or principles.

9. *One speaking with the voice of a god*, in other words, a prophet.

10-11. *The less ambitious.....Poet*, the character of Poet, which though not so aspiring, is less liable to have its reality disputed. People will more easily admit a man's claims to the character of a Poet than to that of a god or a prophet.

12. *Does not pass*, is permanent; is always to be found.

16. *A Hero-soul*, a person possessed of those qualities which go to make up a Hero, or "Great Man."

18. *Be shaped into*, be moulded into; grow or develop into; turn out to be.

22. *Sphere*, circuit of range of action and influence.



## Page 2.

2-3. *The different sphere.....distinction.* This is amplified and explained in the clause immediately following.

5. *Finds himself born into,* finds assigned to him at birth as his sphere of action and influence.

6-7. *Could not be all sorts of men,* adapt himself to any sphere of life, and distinguish himself in one sphere just as well as in another. The meaning is more fully expressed in the two following sentences.

9. *Sing,* celebrate in poetry the exploits and actions of.

12. *The Politician, &c.,* that is, the qualities which go to make up the Politician, &c.

13. *In one or the other degree—*should be “in one degree or another,” as *two* particular degrees are not referred to, and there may be *many*.

15. *Mirabeau,\** Gabriel Honoré, Count De Mirabeau, the greatest orator of the French Revolution (1749—1791), led, in his youth, a scandalous life, and was imprisoned for offences committed by him. Recovered of his folly, he began (1784) to occupy himself chiefly with politics, visited London, published several writings, which made him known, so that the *Tiers Etat* (the Commons) of Aix chose him for their representative to the States-General of 1789. He carried into that assembly, with the boiling passions of youth, the profound knowledge of ripe age. Soon he had the ascendancy over all the orators, eclipsed all reputations, and was the central point of union to all the chief men. He delivered many orations, and was hence designated “the French Demosthenes.” Among these we may mention the Address to the King, to induce him to send away the troops encamped at Versailles; his discourses on the National Bankruptcy; and his reply to the Abbe Maury, touching ecclesiastical property. After having showed himself the most daring reformer, Mirabeau looked with favour on royalty. He, it is said, allowed himself to be gained by court gold; hence he

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\* We have given rather full biographical notices of literary and other distinguished characters, in order that the student may be able to add to his knowledge of English literature, and history. For the purposes of study, he may mark such portions of the notices as he should remember, and omit the rest.



made himself many enemies. Already his influence had begun to give way, when suddenly (April, 1791) his health broke down under the fatigues of his stormy life. His remains were conveyed to the Pantheon; two years afterwards they were disinterred and cast to the winds by the populace. Mirabeau wrote "A Comparison between the Great Condé and Scipio Africanus," "History of Prussia under Frederic the Great," "Secret History of the Court of Berlin:" this book was burnt by the common executioner. He was a remarkable man, whose political character has been much misrepresented. When he became President of the National Assembly, in 1791, he rendered immense services to his country, in introducing clearness and order where all had before been entanglement and confusion. Had his life been prolonged, it is more than a question whether the French Revolution would have been other than a bloodless one,—a simple change from despotism to constitutional monarchy. His death was a public calamity. His ambition was not to set up or destroy absolute monarchy, but to raise himself to the position of prime minister of a constitutional regime.

15. *Glowing*—with passionate feeling; highly impassioned. *Fire*, ardour; vehemence of feeling.

18. *In that way*, in the way he did.

19. *Thitherward*, in that direction, that is, in the direction of poetry.

20. *Fundamental character*, character which forms the foundation on which the specific character of Poet, Politician, Thinker, Legislator, or Philosopher is built up.

21. *That the man be great*. Better: "the greatness of the man." *Napoleon*, Napoleon Buonaparte (1769—1821), the most remarkable character in modern history, was a native of Corsica, and after being educated at the Military School of Brienne, entered the French army at the early age of 16. He saw much active service during the reign of Terror, and was appointed in 1796 to the command of the French army in Italy. In 18 months he had routed or destroyed four armies each stronger than his own, and won a series of brilliant victories. He was now the most popular man in France, and the Directory, either to get rid of their dangerous rival, appointed him to the command



of an expedition fitted out, at his own instance, for the conquest of Egypt. He soon made himself master of that country, and made an unsuccessful attempt to subdue Syria. He suddenly returned to France, and became the head of a very powerful party, and, defeating the Directory, had himself appointed first Consul of the Republic (1799). He began a career of invasion and conquest, and became Emperor of the French in 1804, and, six months later, had himself crowned King of Italy. He placed his brother Joseph upon the throne of Naples, Louis on that of Holland, and Jerome, of Westphalia. He invaded Spain, and made Joseph king of that country, but was driven out by the Spanish, with the help of Britain. His fortunes now began to decline; he nevertheless invaded Russia with an army of half a million men, but was compelled to retreat with immense loss, bringing only a twentieth of that number back; he soon, however, raised another large army and opened the campaign in Germany. Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Sweden, were now allied together against him, and gave his power a deathblow at the battle of Leipsic in 1814, and entered France. He was now obliged to abdicate the throne, and retired to Elba, whence, however, he returned the next year, and he found himself once more at the head of a brave and enthusiastic army. He defeated the Prussians at Ligny, but was himself defeated at the memorable battle of Waterloo (1815). He was sent as a prisoner to the Island of St. Helena, where he died after languishing for six long years.

*Napoleon has words in him which are like, Napoleon has spoken sentences expressive of as much vehemence and impetuosity as.*

22. *Austerlitz*, a town in Moravia, where a battle was fought between the French and the allied Austrian and Russian armies, 2nd Dec. 1805. Three emperors commanded: Alexander of Russia, Francis of Austria, and Napoleon of France. The killed and wounded exceeded 30,000 on the side of the allies, who lost forty standards, 150 pieces of cannon, and thousands of prisoners.

*Louis Fourteenth* (more correctly *Louis XIV*, or *Louis the Fourteenth*), son of Louis XIII. of France and Anne of



Austria, was born September 5, 1638. He succeeded to the throne in 1643, and in his childhood and youth the possession of his person, in order to exercise authority in his name, was fiercely contended for by a variety of factions. The young king's education was superintended by the able but unprincipled Cardinal Mazarin, who inspired him with a thirst for universal dominion. When Louis grew up, he endeavoured to carry this into practice, and the whole of his long reign was employed in encroachments on his neighbours, utterly regardless of the most solemn treaties, and trying to attain his ends by carrying on war in the most barbarous spirit. Both Charles and James of England meanly submitted to become his tools, but William of Orange boldly withstood him, and became the head of a league composed of almost every European state, formed for the avowed purpose of obliging him to respect the rights of his neighbours. Louis, however, had able ministers and generals, and for a long time he was successful in most of his undertakings. He seized on the Spanish Netherlands and on several districts of Germany, brought the Dutch to the very brink of ruin, coerced alike the Algerines, the Genoese, the Pope, and the kings of Spain and Portugal, and established an influence among the Christians of the East which France has never since lost, and created such fleets and armies as had never before belonged to any French king. But he lived to experience bitter reverses. His revocation of the Edict of Nantes gave a heavy blow to the rising commerce of his country, by driving into exile hundreds of thousands of industrious artizans; his fleets were defeated, and at length obliged to seek shelter in their harbours from the attacks of Admirals Russell, Rooke, and others; and though he succeeded in obtaining the Spanish monarchy for his grandson, this was rather the effect of the dissensions in the palace of Queen Anne, than of his arms, as his greatest generals had at length found their superior in Marlborough, and his armies had been ruined by the terrible defeats of Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet. Louis died soon after the close of the war of the Spanish succession, September 1, 1715, and he, *le Grand Monarque*, who had so long afflicted all nations by his mad



ambition, was pursued to the grave by the execrations of his own people.

23. *Marshals*, military officers of the highest rank, in France. Among Louis XIV's Marshals we may name Turenne, Vauban, Luxembourg, Tallard, and Villars.

24. *Turenne*, Henri De La Tour D'Auvergne, Viscount De Turenne (1611—1675), a celebrated French marshal, the second son of the Duc de Bouillon and Elizabeth of Nassau, daughter of William I. of Nassau, Prince of Orange. At the age of 23 he became field-marshal, and in 1643 was appointed Marshal of France, and greatly distinguished himself against the Duke of Bavaria; in the civil war against the Prince of Conte in the Netherlands, and in Franche-Compte. He afterwards defeated the Imperialists at Mulhausen, and again at Turckheim. Montecuculi was then sent against him, and while the two armies were in view of each other, and preparing for battle, Turenne was killed by a cannon-ball, at Sasbach, his army crying out, "Our father is dead!" He left his memoirs, which were published in 1782.

25. *Geniality*, sympathetic cheerfulness, inspiring happiness in others. *Samuel Johnson* (1709—1784), a learned critic, lexicographer and miscellaneous writer, was the son of a Lichfield bookseller. After leaving College, he became usher, married a widow nearly twice his age, and opened a school near his native place. In 1737 he went to London to seek his livelihood. He then entered on the business of a literary hack, and endured many hardships. He wrote a tragedy: *Irene*, but it was refused by the managers, and when Garrick did bring it out in 1749, it proved a failure. In 1738 appeared his first poem *London*, which immediately became popular. In 1747 he issued the Prospectus of the *Dictionary*, which was completed in 1755, and which will be a monument of his stupendous intellect, as long as the English language continues to be spoken. In 1748 he wrote his best poem, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," which like his "London" has in it depths of feeling stirred by a long conflict with adversity. In 1750 he commenced the *Ramble*, and continued it till 1752; in 1758 he began the series of papers called the "Idler," and continued it till 1760.



His tale of "Rasselas," was written in 1759 to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral. In 1773 he made a tour of the western islands of Scotland and published an account of it. His last literary work was the still esteemed "Lives of the Poets," 1779—81. In his latter years he exercised a great influence on the literature of his time; but the pompous, antithetical, and inflexible style with which his name has become identified was soon superseded in public estimation by the vigour and elegance of more natural writers. He was large, robust and unwieldy in person, slovenly in dress, positive and impatient of contradiction in conversation; but with all his singularities and roughness, he had an excellent heart: "he had nothing of the bear but the skin."

28. *Petrarch*, Francis Petrarch (1304—1374), a celebrated Italian poet. On account of the dissensions which raged in his native country, his father removed with him to Avignon, and afterwards to Carpentras, where Petrarch began his education, which was completed at Montpellier and Bologna. He was intended for the law; but Virgil had more charms for him than Justinian. Avignon, where in 1327, he saw a young lady in church, and became passionately in love with her. The name of the lady was Laura de Noves: she was 19 years of age at the time, and the wife of Hugh de Sade, a gentleman at Avignon. Despite the poet's handsome person, impassioned pleading, and flattering verses, he could make no impression upon her heart. After struggling in vain to overcome his passion, he retired to Vancluse, a romantic spot, where he poured out his amorous complaints in several pieces. He afterwards travelled in different countries; but with his return to Vancluse his passion for Laura returned. Again he celebrated her charms and the delights of his retreat. His name became famous; and he received invitations from the senate of Rome, from the King of Naples, and the University of Paris. He accepted the former, and on Easter-day, 1341, was crowned with laurel in the Capitol, with great pomp: he was also declared a Roman citizen. In 1348 he received the news of the death of Laura. He was then at Parma; but immediately set out for Vancluse, where he passed some time in grief.



In his copy of Virgil he thus records the fact: "It was in the early days of my youth that Laura, distinguished by her virtues, and celebrated in my verses, first blessed my eyes in the Church of Santa Clara, at Avignon, and it was in the same month of April, at the same time of the morning, in the year 1348, that this bright luminary was withdrawn from our sight whilst I was at Verona, alas! ignorant of my calamity." In 1352 he returned to Italy, and, at Padua, obtained a canonry; but many years of his life were spent, by invitation, at the courts of the pope and other potentates. The sonnets of Petrarch are tender and melodious in the greatest degree; but, besides being a great poet, he was a profound scholar and patron of learning. His Latin poems are inferior to the Italian; and he wrote extensively upon theological and philosophical subjects.

*Boccaccio*, Giovanni Boccaccio (1313—1375), a celebrated Italian writer. His *La Teseide* was the first chivalrous poem in the Italian language. Chaucer borrowed his *Knight's Tale* from it, and Dryden his *Palamon and Arcite*. But his fame rests on his *Decameron*, consisting of a hundred tales, some pathetic, but the greater number broadly humorous and of a licentious character. He and Petrarch were the revivers of classical learning in Italy, and their writings had great influence on the literature of Europe. Boccaccio may be called the father of Italian prose.

29. *Diplomatic messages*, messages from one state to another in regard to their mutual relations.

31. *Burns*, Robert Burns (1759—1796), the national poet of Scotland, was the son of a small farmer in Ayrshire. He received a common education, during the progress of which he was employed in rustic labour. By application, however, he got some knowledge of French, and he cultivated an acquaintance with a few of the English poets. His first volume of poems was published in 1785, and had a wonderful success. A new edition brought him £ 500, and he commenced as a farmer, and obtained a place in the Excise, but finding himself embarrassed by this double occupation, he gave up farming and settled in Dumfries as an excise-officer. His convivial habits let him too frequently into excesses unworthy of



his great genius, and he died at the early age of 37. Burns stands by general consent in the very first rank of lyric poets. Poems : *Cottar's Saturday Night*, *Duncan Gray*, *Hingland Mary*, *Tom O'Shanter*, *To a Mountain Daisy*, &c.

32. *Made*, become ; turned out (that is if he had adopted oratory and statesmanship as his sphere of activity). *A still better Mirabeau*, a better orator and statesman than Mirabeau himself.

33. *Shakespeare*, William Shakespeare (1564.—1616), the greatest dramatic poet of England, and by universal consent, of the world. Was the son of a glover, and was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, and was educated at the Grammar School of his native town. During his childhood, he had seen strolling companies perform at Stratford, and when his father fell into poverty, he resolved to go to London to seek his living as an actor. This was in 1586, when he had already been married three years and had three children, whom he left at Stratford. At first he obtained employment in a subordinate capacity in the company of actors of which Robert Green, a Stratford man, and Burbage were members. He soon rose to a good position in the company and began that career of dramatic authorship, which has given the world so many monuments of his great genius. His fame and fortune rapidly increased, and about 1605 he retired to Warwickshire, where he lived for the remainder of his life, occasionally visiting the property he had purchased in London. During his retirement at Stratford, he produced his plays founded on Roman history or ancient British history, as well as *The Tempest* and *Henry VIII*. He died on the 53rd anniversary of his birth. Shakespeare wrote altogether 35 complete plays, and portions of *Pericles* and *Titus Andronicus* ; and his early poems of *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, and his sonnets would alone suffice to place him in the very first rank of English poets. His genius was phenomenal and almost universal in its scope, exhibiting a combination of imaginative power, intellectual and moral insight, sympathy with every emotion human nature can experience, and every form of beauty, gaiety, and tenderness, a power of inspiring terror and love, no



phase of which has been rivalled by any other poet or dramatist.

**Page 3.**

1. *Aptitudes of Nature*, natural aptitudes (or, qualities fitting men to excel in particular walks of life).

4. *Doubtless*. Supply "there are," before or after this word. *Circumstance*, surroundings, or "environment" as Herbert Spencer calls it; the state of things into which a man is born.

7. *A vague capability of a man*, a man who is only a vague capability, that is, whose capabilities we can only form a vague idea.

8. *Craftsman*, one killed in any mechanical occupations artizan.

11. *Addison*, Joseph Addison (1672—1719) was Commissioner of Appeals and afterwards Under Secretary of State. He contributed to the "Tatler" started by Steel, and to the *Spectator*, his papers in which are distinguished by one of the letters of the word *Olio*. In 1717 he became Secretary of State, which he soon resigned on a pension of £ 1,500 a year. His chief works are the *Spectator Papers*; *Cato, a Tragedy*; *Poems*. His style is a model of idiomatic English, and colloquial elegance. He is justly regarded as the most distinguished of the essayists, and the forerunner of the great English moralists. In his essays on general literature and especially in his celebrated essays on Milton, he develops the genuine principles of poetical criticism.

12. *Spindle-shanks*, shanks or legs like spindles; thin long legs.

13. *A Samson*, a man possessing a well-built frame and great physical strength, as Samson did. *Samson*, one of the judges who ruled the Israelites before a monarchy was established. He was a man of marvellous strength, and may be called the Hercules of the Bible. On one occasion he carried away the gates of Gaza on his shoulders, and on another he killed a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass. *Whitechapel*, a long spacious street in London. The Garrick Theatre and the London Hospital are in Whitechapel Road.



17. *To whom shall he be bound apprentice, who is to train him to become a hero of a particular class (as master-workmen train apprentices). The answer is: "No one: he must become a hero by his own powers and exertions."*

20. *Controversial-calculation.....him*, calculation as to whether in the struggle between himself and the world, i. e., the state of things into which he is born, as to whether he shall raise himself to the condition of a hero in spite of adverse circumstances, or those circumstances shall prevent him from doing so.

28. *Vates*, in Latin, means 1, a soothsayer or prophet; 2, a poet; 3, any one who excels in his art or profession, and is, it were, an oracle in it.

30. *Well understood*, if their character is understood aright. *Have much kindred of meaning*, are closely related in respect of the meaning of their designations.

31. *Fundamentally*, at bottom; so far as their essential qualities are concerned.

33. *Both of them*—a phrase in apposition with *they*: *penetrated* is intransitive.

34. *Goethe*, the most distinguished name in the modern literature of Germany. His *Sorrows of Werther* was produced while he was smarting under a disappointment in love. His greatest work is *Faust*, a philosophical poem; he also wrote *Stella*, *Count Egmont*—dramatic pieces, *Wilhelm Meister*—a moral fiction, and *Hermann and Dorothea*.

#### Page 4.

1. *The open secret*. An open secret is one something which is known to many persons, though it has not been formally made public, and is pretended to be kept a secret. By calling the mystery of the Universe an "open secret," Goethe means that it may be discovered by any one who puts himself to the trouble and exertion necessary for finding it out.

4. *The Divine Idea of the World*—a phrase used by the Platonic school of philosophy. Plato taught that the world we see around us (the world of sense, or the "Sensible World") was unreal, and that the only real



world is the world of ideas (the "Intelligible World"). He illustrated this by the familiar allegory of the Cave. A man is chained in a cave in such a way that he cannot see anything passing in front of it, but only their shadows cast on the back of the cave which is in front of him. The former are the objects of the Intelligible World, the latter of the Sensible World. Hindu students, who know anything of the Vedantic philosophy (and if any of them do not they had better learn at least the rudiments of it from their own priests) will recognise in this system to the Vedantic. As a matter of fact, Plato learnt his system from the Pythagoreans, and Pythagoras (who lived several years in India) learnt it from the Hindu philosophers. The "Divine Idea" is the *noumenon* underlying all the *phenomena* (or, *Appearance*, l. 5).

6. *Fichte*, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, a celebrated philosopher, was born in 1762, and studied at Jena and Leipzig. In 1793 he became Professor of Philosophy at Jena, and continued in that office till 1799. Till 1805 he lived alternately at Berlin, where he died in 1814. With great genius, penetration, and extraordinary energy, he attempted to supply the defects of the Kantian philosophy, and was the author of a system termed the "Doctrine of Science," which was both idealistic and pantheistic. Among its adherents the most important were Foubert, Niethammer, Reinhold, Schelling, Schad, Abicht, Mehmel, &c. For some time, through the power of eloquence, which Fichte himself possessed in a high degree, this system had great influence over youthful minds, but, owing to its idealistic onesidedness, it could not long withstand the spirit of the age. Its most determined enemies were the followers of Kant. His principal works are "On the Idea of the Doctrine of Science," "Principles of the Doctrine of Science," "Sketch of the Peculiar Characteristics of the Doctrine of Science," "Attempt at a Criticism of all Revelation," "The Way to the Blessed Life." *Appearance*, the *phenomenal* world as distinguished from the *noumenal*. It must be remembered that Fichte's philosophical system was *idealistic* and *pantheistic*.

9-10. *Vesture*, garment, or clothing. *Is*, exists.

11. *Veritably is*, exists in very truth as a reality.



13. *One or the other dialect.* See note on p. 2, l. 13. *Realized*, become a reality as distinguished from an idea; put into a concrete form.

16. *Dead*, lifeless; inanimate. *Upholsterer*, one who furnishes a bed with furniture, beds, curtains, &c. For the derivation of the word see *Appendix*.

24. *Penetrated into it*, that is, into the mystery; discovered the grand arcanum or secret. In using the word *penetrated*, Carlyle probably had in his mind the *penetralia*, or innermost parts, of a temple among the ancient Greeks and Romans, corresponding to the *adytum* of Greek temples, and the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or Holy of Holies, of the Temple at Jerusalem, into which last none but the High Priest was allowed to enter, and that only once a year.

27. *Lives ever present with*, lives in constant intercourse with.

29. *Driven*, forced or compelled.

31. *Hearsay*, knowledge gained by hearsay or at second hand, "mediate knowledge."

32. *Direct Insight*—or Intuition as philosophers call it; "immediate knowledge," as distinguished from mediate.

33. *Whosoever may live*, though any or all others may live.

34. *For him*, that is, for the vates.

## Page 5.

1. *Fact*, reality; the *noumenon* as distinguished from the *phenomena* or shows of things (page 4, l. 34). *A man*, &c. It need hardly be observed that the words from this to the word *is* not a complete sentence, and should have been joined to the previous one, instead of being separated from it by a period. Examples of this "jerky" writing are very common in Carlyle's writings, and are characteristic of his style.

2. *In earnest with*, dealing in a spirit of earnestness or seriousness with.

5. *Participators in*, both acquainted with. '*The open secret.*' See p. 4, ll. 1—8.

9. *Duty and Prohibition*, what to do and what not to do.



10. *The æsthetic side*, the side of taste (Greek *æsthesis*, the act of perceiving by the senses), *i.e.*, the perception of what is beautiful or excellent in nature, time, art, or literature. It may be noted here that this word was invented by the German philosopher Baumgarten about ninety years ago and is now in universal use in Germany. It was Carlyle who first introduced it into English literature in 1827 in his "Essay on Richter" in the *Edinburgh Review*, and the word has now become established in English both as an adjective and an adverb, and in its noun form *Æsthetics* (the Science of Taste). *The Beautiful*, beauty. Note the use of the definite article.

13. *Run into one another*, have something in common which links them together inseparably.

14. *Has his eye on*, looks to.

16. *The highest Voice*, namely, that of Jesus Christ. The quotation that follows is from *Mathew*, vi, 28, 29.

18. *Solomon*—son of David, and King of Israel after him. He is also author of several books of the Bible. He is often spoken of as "the Preacher," with reference to his books "Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher." When God appeared to Solomon and asked him what blessing he would have, he asked for wisdom, and God, pleased with his choice, gave him not only wisdom, but also wealth and honour, more than any man ever had before him or ever would have after him.

20. *A glance, that, into*—a terser form of "that was indeed a glance, into." *The deepest deep*, the very lowest depth; the deepest or innermost recess—probably a reminiscence of Milton's: "In the lowest deep, a lower deep" (*Paradise Lost*, IV, 76). Carlyle means that Christ's remark shows that he was able to perceive the real essence of beauty.

22. *Furrow-field*, field full of furrows made by ploughing. The student should notice how Carlyle makes new compounds when he requires any, to express his meaning tersely. He does this in imitation of German writers, whose language admits of compounds that take one's breath off to pronounce. Here is an example:

*Jungefrauenzimmerdurchschwindsuchttoedtingsgegenverein.*

23. *A beautiful eye*, namely, the soul, or principle of beauty, of which the flower is the embodiment.



27. *Staggered*, struck as being extremely difficult, if not impossible, to be believed.

32. *Vauxhall*, a suburb of London, in the parish of Lambeth, which contained the celebrated Vauxhall Gardens, also called Spring Gardens, a favourite place of amusement, which was done away with in 1860. It was the resort of beauty and fashion, and masques, shows, and other entertainments were provided for them. The Gardens were decorated according to the meretricious and vitiated tastes of the time when they first became a place of amusement ; it was gaudy, but the reverse of beautiful.

#### Page 6.

1. *It were*, it would be. *A kind of treason*, a sort of disloyalty of the same kind as treason in its proper sense—disloyalty to the sovereign, or royal family, especially killing or attempting to kill him or any of them, or planning or even imagining it.

5. *A vein of poetry*, a current, or pervading element, of poetic feeling.

7. *Read a poem well*, that is, so as to take in its meaning, and appreciate fully the poetic feeling it contains.

8. *The Hell of Dante*. For a description of this, see *Introd.* IV, pages lii—lix. The life of Dante is given in *Introd.* V, pp. lxxvii—lxxviii.

10. *Saxo-Grammaticus*, a Danish chronicler, who went to Paris in 1177, and became a member of the religious order of St. Genevieve. He wrote the “History of the Northern Nations,” founded upon the popular traditions ; the “Icelandic Sagas ;” and the “Songs of the Scalds.” He died about 1204.

11. *The story of Hamlet*—is briefly as follows: Hamlet, prince of Denmark, a man of mind but not of action, nephew of Claudius, the reigning king, who had married the widowed queen. Hamlet loved Ophelia, daughter of Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain ; but feeling it to be his duty to revenge his father’s murder, he abandoned the idea of marriage, and treated Ophelia so strangely, that she went mad, and, gathering flowers from a brook, fell into the water and was drowned. While wasting his energy in speculation, Hamlet accepted a challenge from



Laertes of a friendly contest with foils; but Laertes used a poisoned rapier, with which he stabbed the young prince. A scuffle ensued, in which the combatants changed weapons, and Laertes being stabbed, both died.

16. *Arbitrary*, not based on any rule or principle.

19. *World-Poets*, Poets acknowledged as such by all countries, not by any particular country alone; "Universal Poets." Such are Dante, Shakespeare, Homer, Valmicki, Kalidas.

25. *Some touches of the Universal*, some of those qualities which make one considered a poet by all people and in all times, in a greater or less degree.

28. *Homer*, the most ancient and celebrated of the Greek Poets. Nothing certain is known of his life, and some have even gone so far as to doubt that such a poet ever lived, holding that the works bearing his name are simply a collection of fragments of various old authors. The principal poems bearing the name of Homer, are *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. The epic burlesque, *Batrachomyomachia* ("The Battle of the Frogs and Mice"), was also ascribed to him. Homer is supposed to have lived in the 9th century before Christ.

29. *Is not*, ceases to be remembered; is forgotten entirely.

## Page 7.

2. *Unendlichkeit*, unendingness; infinitude.

5—7. *If well meditated.....in it*. The construction is faulty. *Meditated*, as the sentence stands, qualifies *meaning*, but is meant to qualify *it*.

8. *Vulgar distinction*, distinction commonly made, and received; distinction made by the generality of people as distinguished from critics, who are specially qualified to make the distinguish.

12. *Authentically musical*, genuinely or really musical; possessed the real essence of music or melody.

15. *If not, not*, it be not so, it will not be poetical. *How much lies in that*, what deep meaning lies in that word.

17. *The inmost heart*, the true essence or substance. *The thing*—which forms the subject of the thought. Car-



lyle here lays down the doctrine that music underlies, and forms the essence, of the universe, and therefore of everything in it, and that the particles of which a thing is composed cohere, or are held together, by music alone.

20. *Soul*, essence.

21. *All inmost things*, that is, the inmost or essential part, or soul, of all things.

22. *Utter themselves*, find expression in words.

24. *In logical words*, in language that will stand the test of logical criticism. Carlyle means that if we should try to express the effect of music, our language will be unintelligible, and people will think we are talking nonsense.

27. *The meaning of Song goes deep*, Song, or Music, has a very deep meaning.

27. *For moments*, that is, during the time we feel the inexpressible ecstatic effect of the music. Music, Carlyle says, gives us, by the ecstasy it throws us into, momentary glimpses of the Infinite. This passage reminds us of St. Paul's description of his ecstasy. He says: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. I knew such a man.....how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 *Corinthians*, XII, 2—4). *The Infinite*, a collective name for all that is infinite, unfathomable, incomprehensive, including God, Heaven, &c.

30. *Parish accent*, peculiarity of accent, or the peculiar manner of modulating the voice which distinguishes people of one parish from another.

34. *Passionate*, impassioned; excited or vehement; inspired with strong emotion.

#### Page 8.

3. *Zealous anger*, anger caused by zeal or enthusiasm.

6. *Wrappages*, external wrappings or coverings. *Hulls*, outer coverings or husks, as of a nut.

8. *Sphere-Harmonies*, or *Music of the Spheres*. Pythagoras, having ascertained that the pitch of notes depends on the rapidity of vibrations, and also that the planets move at different rates of motion, concluded that the sounds



made by their motion must vary according to their different rates of motion. As all things in nature are harmoniously made, these sounds must harmonize, and the combination he called the "harmony of the spheres."

Shakespeare alludes to this in the *Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 60 :

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims.

And Milton in *Arcades*, ll. 63-4, speaks of

"the celestial sirens' harmony,  
That sit upon the nine enfolded spheres."

9. *Soul*. See p. 8, l. 20, and note.

13. *Turns on*, is dependent for its action on. The metaphor is from a door turning on its hinges: if the hinges are gone, the door cannot turn.

15. *See deep enough and you see musically*, if you have the power of seeing into the inmost part of things, what you see will be music (for "all inmost things are melodious": p. 7, ll. 21-2).

18. *Apocalypse*, revelation (Gr. *apokalypsis*, a revelation; from *apokalyptein*, to uncover; from *apo*, away or off, and *kalyptein*, to cover). The term is specifically applied to the Apocalypse of St. John, called in the English Bible "The Revelation of St. John." *Melodious apocalypse of Nature*, revelation of Nature in musical language, in other words, poetry. Or Carlyle may mean "revelation of the music of Nature" which would mean pretty much the same thing, in his view.

23. *Only as Poet*—but not as Divinity or Prophet; only in the inferior capacity of Poet.

27. *His most miraculous word*, utterances which best show his miraculous gift.

29. *Beautiful verse-maker*. This would mean "an excellent maker of verses." Carlyle's meaning seems to be "maker of beautiful verses," in which case he might, affecting a German style as he does, have put a hyphen between *beautiful* and *verse*, also.

31. *Intrinsically*, looking at things as they are, not as they appear; i. e., the realities of things.



## Page 9.

2. *Literally divine*, divine in the literal sense of the term ; actually a divine being or god.

6. *In our like*, in human beings like ourselves.

7. *Taking thought of*, taking into serious consideration. *Sceptical Dilettantism*, Dilettantism combined with scepticism, *i. e.*, the habit of doubting everything that has not been, or cannot be, directly proved to be true ; specifically, a doubting of the truth of revelation, or the denial of the truth of the Christian religion. The former is the sense in which Carlyle uses the word : the nineteenth century is pre-eminently an age of scepticism. *Dilettantism* (or, as more commonly spelt *dilettanteism*), desultoriness and frivolity in following art, science, or literature.

10. *Make sad work*, cause very great havoc or mischief.

12. *Comes out in poor plight*, emerges (from the fight with sceptical dilettantism) in a wretched condition ; appears in a wretched condition, after the injuries it has sustained from sceptical dilettantism. *Comes out*, emerges or issues (that is, from the struggle).

13. *Worship the shows of great men*, worship persons who have the appearance of great men, whether or not they be so in reality. Carlyle elsewhere calls these "shows" by the Latin name "*simulacra*," *i. e.*, images or shows.

15. *Dreariest*, most dry, dismal, and cheerless. *Fatalest*, most dangerous and pernicious—because if people disbelieve the possibility of a man being a hero, no one will raise himself to be one, and the result will be that in a short time it will be impossible for any one to become a great man, the ideal or standard of greatness being altogether lost.

16. *Despair of human things*, give up all hope of mankind ever improving, intellectually, morally, or otherwise.

17. *Nevertheless*, in spite of this disbelief in the reality of greatness.

18. *A Corsican lieutenant of artillery*. Napoleon was born at Ajaccio in Corsica, and entered the French army as a lieutenant in an artillery corps.



19. *The show of him*, what he outwardly appears to be.
20. *After his sort*, according to the kind of worship given to persons of his class (*i. e.*, to military heroes). *Tiaraed*, wearing a tiara, or royal head-dress with a high crown. Specifically the term *tiara* is applied to the triple crown worn by the Pope. *Diademed*, wearing a diadem or crown.
21. *High Duchesses*, Duchesses of high position in the peerage. Burns was very kindly entertained by the Duke and Duchess of Athole during a tour he made in the Highlands. When he arrived at Athole house the Duke was from home, but the Duchess, being informed of his arrival, gave him an invitation to stay there till the Duke's return; and much attention was paid to him during his stay.
22. *Ostler*, a servant at an inn or hotel who has the care of the horses of the guests.
24. *The man*, the ideal man; the type of what a man should be.
26. *Accredited*, authorised; generally recognised (as the proper way).
28. *Sun-eyes*, flaming or bright eyes.
33. *And all that brood*, and all other qualities of the same race, stock, or origin; and all similar qualities. *Sorrowful*, unhappy (*i. e.*, causing unhappiness); wretched.

#### Page 10.

2. *In the things*, in the realities of things as distinguished from their shows.
3. *Non-extant*. "Non-existent" is the more usual word.
4. *Were it*, would it be.
6. *Two mere Poets*, two persons who were Poets and nothing more, that is, who were great in poetry and poetry alone.
7. *Beatified*. In the Roman Catholic church, *beatification* (literally, making blessed) confers on a deceased person a rank below that conferred by *canonization*. Persons who are beatified (after death) are revered as blessed, and are spoken of as "*the Blessed So-and-so*," but do not receive



the honours paid to those who are *canonized*. These receive a degree of reverence second only to that paid to God and are spoken of as "*Saint So-and-so*." Persons who are beatified are usually canonized after some time. Beatification may be described as an inferior degree of canonization.

7. *Are Saints of Poetry*, are in the realm of Poetry what the Saints are in the Christian religious system.

8. *Canonized*—and not simply beatified.

9. *It is impiety to meddle with them*, to meddle with them (i. e. to dispute their claims to the position they hold in the estimation of the world) would be as great an act of irreverence as it would be to dispute a canonised person's claim to sainthood.

10. *The unguided instinct of mankind*, men's instinctive ideas, uncontrolled by any extraneous influences, as Dilettantism, &c.

11. *These perverse impediments*, "Dilettantism, Scepticism, Triviality, and all that sorrowful brood."

13. *In a kind of royal solitude*, without equal or rival, as kings dwell; in a position unapproachable by any others; with "no brother near the throne," to use Pope's phrase.

15. *A certain transcendentalism*, a certain character which gives them supereminence over all others.

17. *No Pope or Cardinals*. When the *Pope* thinks proper to canonize a deceased person, he calls a consistory, or meeting of the College of Cardinals, and declares his views to them, and after formal discussion and inquiry of the proposed person's claim to the dignity of a saint, the ceremony is performed by the Pope, assisted by the Cardinals, and other dignitaries of the Church. *Cardinals* are the highest dignitaries in the Roman Catholic Church after the Pope, whose electors and counsellors they are. They form a body called the "Sacred College." *Took hand*, took part; had a share. "Had a hand" is the usual phrase.

19. *Most unheroic times*, times most unfitted for the development of the heroic character.

24. *In that fashion*, in the form of remarks first on Dante, and then on Shakespeare.



26. *His book*, Dante's "*La Divina Comedia*," i. e. "The Divine Comedy." For Dante's life, see *Introduction* V.

33. *Here*, in this world.

**Page 11.**

2. *Giotto*, so called by an abbreviation of his proper name, "Angiolotto" (little angel), a painter, sculptor, and architect (born about 1266, at Vespignano, near Florence, died in 1334) was in his infancy a shepherd boy. Cimabue described his talent, and took him as a pupil. Cimabue had already restored the arts by reviving the study of nature, but his manner was rude and dry. Giotto, in also taking nature for his model, clothed it in nobler forms, and so far prepared the way for Raphael. Among Giotto's many pictures, there may be mentioned "St Francis d' Assisi," "St. Peter on the Water." As architect he directed the fortifications of Florence in 1334. Giotto was the friend of Dante, whose features he has preserved in a little painting, and who in return consecrated to him a few verses, in his "*Divina Comedia*."

4. *Touching*, producing emotions of tenderness.

5. *As on vacancy*, as if painted on a blank space; painted without any background to it.

6. *Laurel*. Victors in the poetical competitions at the Greek games were crowned with a wreath of berry-bearing laurel twigs—hence the modern term *poet-laureate*. Petrarch was crowned with laurel in the Capitol at Rome on Easter day, 1341, in acknowledgment of his superior poetical talent. The portraits of Dante and Petrarch represent them crowned with laurel. See p. 11, l. 6.

7. *The known victory*, the consciousness of having obtained a victory.

10. *From reality*, from a real living original, not as a creation of the painter's fancy.

13. *Congeaed into sharp contradiction*, hardened or rendered immobile, so as to express emotions directly opposed to these feelings (softness, &c.).

15. *Hopeless pain*, pain which the sufferer has no hope of having removed or assuaged.

16. *Grim-trenchant*, grim and trenchant; fierce-looking and sharp.

*cutting*



17. *Thick-ribbed ice*, ice shutting it in closely. The epithet is Shakespearian: "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice" (*Measure for Measure*, III, i, 123). For the use of *rib*, compare *Merchant of Venice*: "To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave." *Withal*, at the same time.

19. *The thing that is eating-out his heart*, the thing that is corroding and destroying his heart (namely, his pain and indignation at the unjust treatment that he has received at his country's hands).

23-4. *One wholly in protest.....the world*, one who protests with all the vehemence of his nature against the treatment the world has accorded him, and is engaged in a perpetual fight with it, determined never to yield.

26. *Equable*, uniform; not subject to changes of degree.

28. *Why the world was of such a sort*, why the world should be so bad as he found it.

29. *Voice of ten silent centuries*, first poet of Italy after ten centuries during which no poet had appeared at all in that country. The last Roman poet of any note was Claudian, who flourished at the close of the fourth century. Dante flourished in the fourteenth century, and therefore the Italian Muse had been silent for ten centuries, before it again found utterance in the poems of Dante.

30. *His mystic unfathomable song*, namely, the *Divina Comedia*. The words are Tiecks: see p. 16, l. 16. *Unfathomable*—because it is impossible to understand the whole hidden meaning of it.

## Page 12.

2. *Then going*, that was in vogue at the time; that could be at that period. *School-divinity*, theology as taught by the *Schoolmen*. These were a class of philosophers who arose in the middle ages, and taught a peculiar kind of philosophy, which consisted in applying the ancient dialectics to theology, and intimately uniting both. On account of the excessive subtlety which prevailed in the scholastic philosophy, the expression *scholastic* has been used to denote the extreme of *subtlety*. After the Reformation and the Revival of Letters, the system gra-



dually declined, till it gave place to the enlightened philosophy of Lord Bacon and the great men who have followed in his track and carried out his principles. They were so named on account of their having originally been teachers of rhetoric in the public schools founded by Charlemagne in 800—814. *Aristotelian logic*, the science of logic as propounded by Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, born at Stagira in Macedonia, B. C. 384. He was a pupil of Plato, and the tutor of Alexander the Great. His system of Logic was the only logical system of Europe for centuries, till Bacon placed the inductive logic by its side.

3. *Provinces of nature*, that is, departments of human knowledge.

7. *Cultivated understanding*, intellect well developed by training and culture.

9. *Realise*, acquire for himself as an actual possession. *Scholastics*, schoolmen: see note on l. 2.

10. *What lies close to him*, things which come within the scope of his own experience and observation.

14-6. *The small clear light.....off*, while he speaks with great clearness and accuracy of things which come within the scope of his own experience and observation, his statements become vague and mixed with inaccuracies when dealing with matters beyond it. *Chiaroscuro* (Italian), literally clear—obscure, technically, the advantageous distribution of lights and shadows in a picture; here, mixture of light and shade, that is, metaphorically, of knowledge and ignorance, or accuracy and inaccuracy.

16. *From the schools*, acquired by the education he received under the schoolmen.

19. *By natural gradation of talent and service*, when he had gradually risen to that position in the State in respect of talents and length of service, which was a necessary qualification for the office of Chief Magistrate, or *Prior* as such an officer was called in Florence at the time.

22. *Beatrice Portinari*. She was a young Florentine lady of the illustrious family of Portinari, for whom Dante conceived a strong but purely platonic affection, and whom he represents in the *Divina Comedia* as his guide through Paradise.



23-4. *Rank*, social position. *In partial sight of her*, seeing her occasionally.

25. *Readers*—of Dante's poems. *Account*—in the *Vita Nuova* ("the New Life"), Dante's earliest work, in which he gives an idealised narrative of his life from his ninth to his twenty-seventh year.

27. *Another*. His name was Simone dei Bardi.

28. *Makes a great figure*, plays a prominent part.

29. *To have made a great figure in his life*, to have influenced his life in a great degree.

30. *Held apart from him*, precluded from intercourse with him by having become the wife of another.

### Page 13.

1. *Keen excitabilities*, acute susceptibilities; great sensitiveness of temper.

5. *Prior, Podesta, &c.* The Chief Magistrates of Venice were at this time designated *Priors* (literally, those placed above others in rank or authority). *Podesta*, one of the Chief Magistrates of Genoa and Venice.

6. *Well accepted among*, having a good reputation among; popular with.

7. *Had wanted*, would have wanted, or been without. *One of the most notable words*—namely, the *Divina Comedia*.

10. *Continued*, had (i.e. would have) continued. *Voiceless*, without a poet: see p. 11, l. 29 and note.

10. *Ten other listening centuries*—from the fourteenth to the twenty-fourth. Carlyle does not mean that after the twenty-fourth century Dante's great poem will cease to be read; he speaks of *ten* listening centuries *after* him, simply because there had been the *same* number of voiceless centuries *before* him.

16. *Give him the choice of his happiness!* The idea of *his* being allowed to choose what he considered a happy lot is absurd; for he would not have been able to choose correctly, any more than any of us should be able to do if we were given such a choice. Carlyle means that no man is competent to decide what will, or will not, be a happy lot: God alone can judge of that.

19. *Guelf-Ghibelline*. The Guelfs and Ghibellines were respectively the papal and imperial factions who destroyed



the peace of Italy from the 12th to the end of the 15th century (the invasion of Charles VIII of France in 1495). The origin of the names is ascribed to the contest for the imperial crown between Conrad of Hohenstanfen, Duke of Swabia, Lord of Wiblingen (hence *Ghibelin*), and Henry, nephew of Welf, or Guelf, Duke of Bavaria, in 1138. The former was successful; but the popes and several Italian cities took the side of his rival. "*Hie Guelf*" and "*Hie Ghibelin*" are said to have been used as war-cries in 1140; at a battle before Weinsberg, in Wurtemberg, when Guelf of Bavaria was defeated by the Emperor Conrad IV. who came to help the rival Duke Leopold. The Ghibelines were almost totally expelled from Italy in 1267, when Conradin, the last of the Hohenstaufens, was beheaded by Charles of Anjou. It will be seen that the Ghibellines had been expelled before 1300, the year of Dante's appointment as Podesta. The Bianchi and the Neri were two parties into which the Guelfs were split up: see next note.

20. *Bianchi-Neri*. The Bianchi (Whites) were a political party at Florence, in 1300, in favour of the Ghibellines or imperial party, headed by Vieri de Cerchi, opposed the Neri (or Blacks), headed by Corso de Donati. The latter banished their opponents, among whom was the poet Dante, in 1302.

26. *Nefarious*, atrociously base and wicked.

27. *Tried what was in him*, did all that lay in his power.

28. *By warlike reprisal*. Dante, on learning of his banishment joined himself to the other exiles, and they repaired to Arezzo in a numerous body, made Count Alessandro da Romena, their commander and appointed a council of twelve, of which number Dante was one. In 1304, being joined by a large force from Arezzo, Bologna, and Pistoja, they made a sudden attack on the city of Florence, gained possession of one of the gates, and conquered part of the territory, but were finally compelled to retreat.

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6. *Nunquam revertar* (Latin). In many cases where Carlyle quotes Latin or Italian, he gives the translation as here. The two words mean "I will never return."



12. *The wretched are not cheerful company*, persons who are miserable cannot make themselves cheerful companions.

14. *Moody humours*, melancholy or gloomy temperament.

15. *Can della Scala*, a prince of the illustrious Scalligeri or Della Scala family. He was called "Can' Grande," i. e. Cane the Great. Dante was received by this prince with open arms and treated at first with great honour, but soon fell from favour on account of his uncourtier-like independence and pride, and left Della Scala's court.

19. *Mime*, an actor in a kind of farce among the Greeks and Romans, in which the actors, dressed in hideous or fantastic costumes, represented real characters; here, mimics, that is, buffoons who excite laughter or derision by acting or speaking in the manner of others. *Nebulones* (Lat). properly means "good-for nothing fellows"; and *histriones*, actors that express anything by gesticulation. Fools and jesters were an invariable appendage of royalty in former times.

21. *This poor fool*. He points to one of his mimes or buffoons as he speaks. *Fool*, licensed fool; buffoon.

25. *Bitterly*, with much sharpness or harshness.

26. *Like to like*, only people of like character can make themselves agreeable to one another. Dante meant that the prince was as foolish and frivolous as his mimes and buffoons.

27. *Given the amuser.....given*, it is not enough that there is a person who is able to amuse—there must also be a person capable (by similarity of character) of being amused by him (: for only people of like character can amuse one another).

29. *Succeed at court*, become a successful courtier (and make his fortune).

33. *To wander, to wander*, to go on wandering from place to place; to live a wandering life.

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3. *Time-world*, world which is subject to limitation of time, that is, must come to an end. Carlyle is adopting



the common (but unphilosophical) distinction between Time and Eternity. Eternity is the endless continuation of Time, and neither can end.

9. *Bound*, destined to go ; going.

10. *Made his home in*, that is, lived in the spirit or imagination in ; made the constant subject of his thoughts.

13. *Bodied or bodiless*, whether it is a world having material qualities as length, breadth, &c., or is a purely spiritual or ideal one.

15. *In fixed certainty of scientific shape*, in a shape as fixed and certain as if it had been determined or ascertained by scientific methods of investigation and proof.

16. *Malebolge* (literally, evil pits or holes) is described by Dante as "a place in hell, all of stone, and of an iron colour. Right in the middle there yawns a well exceeding deep and wide." It is divided into ten separate portions all tending towards the dark well in the centre. The description of the horrors which Dante says he witnessed here is almost insupportable, and we refrain from reproducing it.

17. *Alti guai*, great sufferings or afflictions.

30. *Follow thou thy star*, pursue the career that Providence has placed before thee—a metaphor from sailors guiding their course by observing the pole-star. These words were spoken by Brunetto Latini (p. 19, l. 27), to Dante.

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3. *Made me lean*—through hard work.

7. *With his heart's blood*, at the cost of great injury done to his vital energies ; at the sacrifice of a portion of his natural life time.

10. *Hic claudor*, &c., here am I Dante shut up, banished from my native shores. Carlyle's translation below is not quite exact.

15. *Tieck*, Ludwig Tieck (1773—1853), a celebrated German writer, and elder brother of the preceding. He distinguished himself in early life at the universities of Halle, Gottingen, and Erlangen, and in his 19th year, made his first effort in literature, by producing "*Almansur*," a prose idyll. He is best known in England by his fan-



tastic tales, some of which have been translated by Carlyle; but he is entitled to a far higher rank as the author of "The Life and Death of Giovanna," and other fine dramas. In 1820, by invitation of the King of Prussia, he went to Berlin, where he exercised great influence in literature and the drama.

17. *Coleridge*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1762--1834), a distinguished English poet, was the son of a Devonshire vicar and was educated at Christ's Hospital. He entered Cambridge University, but left it soon on account of a disappointment in love. In 1796 he published a small volume of poems, and in 1797 he wrote his "Ancient Mariner," the first part of "Christabel," and his tragedy of *Remorse*. He next visited Germany and acquired an intimate knowledge of German literature. Next year he took up his abode at the Lakes, where Wordsworth and Southey had already settled. He wrote several works on different subjects, and achieved a great reputation, but impaired his fine power by indulging in opium-eating. He was a man of marvellous ability, but possessed a dreamy undecided nature, which prevented him from achieving any really great and worthy work. Some of his poetry is exquisite; his criticisms are profound, and his learning vast. Among his numerous works may be mentioned *Kubla Khan* (composed in a dream), *Translation of "Wallenstein," "Aids to Reflection," Biographia "Literaria," "Lay Sermons," "Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare."*

18. *Very pertinently*, with great appositeness or appropriateness.

22. *Strangely*, by some inexplicable bond of connection or union.

23. *The Heroic of Speech*, the highest or sublimest form of speech. Carlyle has not used the same phrase, but has expressed the same idea in other words, as in pp. 1, 7-8, &c.

26. *Right poems*, poems properly so called.

27. *Cramped into jingling rhymes*, forced to assume the shape of lines of fixed length, rhyming with one another. Milton calls rhyme "the jingling sound of like endings."



29. *To the great grief of the reader—at not being able to comprehend the meaning easily and fully.*

33. *Rapt into the true passion of melody, thrown into a state of ecstasy by the true poetical feeling.*

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7. *Not to say an insupportable business, even if we do not go to the length of calling it an altogether insupportable business.*

8. *Inward necessity, necessity arising from the intrinsically musical nature of the ideas to be expressed.*

13. *There is no vocation in them for singing it, they are not called upon to sing it.*

14. *Wooden noise, a sound devoid of music, like that produced by striking on a piece of wood (as contrasted with the sound produced by striking the chords of a lyre or harp).*

21-2. *Canto fermo*, a plain ecclesiastical chant used in cathedral service; here, a sound like that of a plain chant. Carlyle means that when we read the *Divina Commedia*, our voice naturally assumes the tone of a chant. *Chant*, words recited to musical tones without musical measure. Sanskrit *slokas* have a pleasing effect on the ear when chanted, as they are by Brahmin priests. *Language*. Carlyle means the arrangements of the words, that is, the measure employed.

23. *Terza rima*, a measure consisting of sets of three verses arranged in such a way that the middle line of each set rhymes with the first and third lines of the succeeding set; thus the first 12 lines of the episode of Ugolina in the *Divina Commedia* rhyme thus:\*

$$\begin{array}{cccccccccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 & 11 & 12 \\ a & b & a & b & c & b & c & d & c & d & e & d \end{array}$$

*Lilt*, a cheerful or lively succession of sounds, as in singing—a Scotch word.

26. *Depth*, depth of feeling; deep feeling.

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\* The rhyming lines are marked by the same letter placed under each letter. The double lines divide sets of three verses.



30. *Proportionates it*, preserves due proportion between the parts of which it is composed.

30. *Architectural*, architectural harmony, I repeat.

31. *Which*—refers to *harmony* in the preceding line.

32. *Inferno, &c., Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise*—the three parts of the poem.

34. *World-cathedral*, a cathedral which is itself a world.

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3. *The measure of worth*, the standard by which to estimate the degree of worth of the poem.

4. *Heart of hearts*, innermost heart ; profoundest depth of feeling.

9. *In Hell enough*, in sufficiently intense misery.

11. *Commedias*, poems like the *Divina Commedia*.

12. *Come-out*, issue from the author's pen ; emerge into existence as the offspring of the author's genius.

14. *The daughter of pain*, bred from pain ; produced by painful effort.

17. *Become perfect through suffering*. Cf. *Hebrews*, II, 10 : "the captain of their salvation made perfect through sufferings." Christ by his sufferings and death became a perfect mediator for men, and obtained salvation for them.

19. *Elaborated*, perfected with great labour and pains-taking.

23. *Into truth*, so as to make it the truthful description of a reality, not a fiction of the imagination. *Into clear visuality*, so as to appear a real object vividly presented to the eye ; so as to present to the eye a clear image of the thing described.

26. *The soul of Dante*, an embodiment of the feelings and opinions of Dante.

27. *Rhythmical*—because it is embodied in verse.

30. *Intensity*, great vehemence or earnestness of feeling.

33. *Catholic*, having comprehensive and liberal views.

34. *Sectarian mind*, mind having sympathies only those of his own sect.

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2-3. *World-great*, great in the estimation of the whole world. *Not because he is world-wide*, not because his sym-  
 pa-



thies embrace all nations and creeds; not because he is cosmopolitan in his opinions and feelings. *Because he is world-deep*, because he has an intensity of feeling which makes him penetrate into the heart of things—a quality which people of all nations and creeds can sympathise with and appreciate.

5-6. *He pierces into the heart of Being*, he tries to grasp the real truth of Existence—the substance underlying the phenomena of the Universe.

9. *Paints*, that is, by means of words; delineates persons and things with vividness.

10. *Seizes the very type of a thing*, grasps the essential qualities of a thing (*i. e.* those qualities which make it what it is), omitting all *accidental* qualities, which vary in different things of the same class.

12. *The Hall of Dite*, the Hall, or rather City, of Dis, or Pluto, in the sixth circle of Hell. Dante, on seeing it from a distance tells Virgil, his guide, who had warned him what place they were approaching:

“The minarets already, Sir,  
There, certes, in the valley I descry,  
Gleaming *vermilion*, as if they from fire  
Had issued.”—(*Cary*).

Hence Carlyle's “*red pinnacle*.” Dante speaks of *towers* in the plural. In Mrs. Oliphant's words, the two saw “the City of Dis, rising red out of the valley, its towers and mosques burning with a concentrated redness as of flame.”

13. *Cone of iron*. Dante describes the walls of the City of Dis as appearing as if made of iron. *Cone*. A pinnacle is either pyramidal or cone-shaped.

14. *And for ever*—to the eye of memory; and never to be forgotten.

17. *Tacitus* (55—130), a Roman historian, son-in-law of Agricola, governor of Britain. His chief works are a History of the Reign of Tiberius, and a Life of Agricola. Of his other histories and of his Annals only parts remain. His Latin is remarkable for its purity and elegance, and his greatest strength lies in portraying character. His style is highly condensed.



18. *Natural condensation*, condensation naturally resulting from his mental temperament, not produced by conscious effort.

22. *With a sharp decisive grace*, in clear forcible graceful language. The metaphor is from sculpture.

23. *As with a pen of fire*. The metaphor is mixed: we cut figures with a chisel, not a pen.

24. *Plutus*, the Greek god of wealth—not to be confounded with Pluto (or Dis), the god of the infernal regions. Dante describes Pluto as stationed at the outside of the fourth circle of Hell. As Virgil and Dante approach, Plutus makes a great noise to prevent them from entering; but Virgil calls out to him:

“Curst wolf! thy fury inward on thyself  
Prey and consume thee!”

And

“As sails full spread and bellying with the wind,  
Drop suddenly collapsed, if the mast split;  
So to the ground down dropt the cruel fiend.”—(Cary.)

*Virgil*. Dante represents Virgil as his guide through Hell and Purgatory. See Introduction IV, para 1. *As the sails sink, &c.* See lines just quoted above.

27. *Brunetto Latini* (1230—1294), an Italian scholar, who had been Dante's master. Dante meets him in the third compartment of the seventh circle of Hell, with “parched looks.....smirched with fire.” *Cotto aspetto*, baked face; scorched aspect; “parched looks.” Some editions wrongly read, *Sordello* for *Brunetto Latini*; but Dante meets Sordello (a Provencal poet) in Purgatory, not in Hell; and it is Latini, not Sordello, whom he describes as having the “*cotto aspetto*.” The mistake seems to have been made by Carlyle when he first delivered this lecture.

28. *The fiery snow, &c.* In the third compartment of the seventh circle, where Dante meets Latini, flakes of fire are eternally showering down upon those who are undergoing punishment there.

30. *The lids of those tombs*. The City of Dis is described as a vast enclosure of tombs or vaults, in which the souls of heretics undergo punishment. These tombs are full of flames which burn with the intensest heat imaginable.



They are all open, and their lids hang suspended above them. The tombs are to be closed only on the Day of Judgment.

31. *Sarcophaguses*, stone-coffins—literally flesh-consuming things. The Greeks made them of a kind of limestone which had the property of consuming the flesh of the bodies deposited in them, in a few weeks; whence the name.

34. *Farinata*. As Dante passes by one of the tombs in the City of Dis, he is thus saluted by its tenant (who has uplifted himself from it, so that he is visible from the waist upwards) as follows:

“O Tuscan! thou, who through the City of fire  
 Alive art passing, so discreet of speech;  
 Here, please thee, stay a while. Thy utterance  
 Declares the place of thy nativity  
 To be that noble land, with which, perchance,  
 I too severely dealt.”

The person who thus addresses him from the midst of the flames, proves to be Farinata de' Uberti, the chief of the Ghibelline faction at Florence, who triumphed over the Guelphs at the battle of Arbia, and saved his country, which the Ghibelines were about to sacrifice, to secure their own safety. Farinata was one of those great characters, of which antiquity, or the middle ages, alone, afford us any example. Controlling, with the hand of a master, the course of events, as well as the minds of men, destiny itself seems to submit to his will, and the very torments of hell are insufficient to disturb the haughty tranquillity of his spirit. He is admirably portrayed in the conversation which Dante has assigned to him. Every passion is concentrated in his attachment to his country and his party; and the exile of the Ghibelines inflicts upon him far greater torments than the burning couch upon which he is reposing.

## Page 20.

1. *How Cavalcante falls*. Cavalcante Cavalcanti, a poet of Florence, was the father of Guido Cavalcanti, whom Dante terms “the first of my friends”, in his *Vita Nuova*, where the commencement of their friendship is



related. From the character given of him by contemporary writers, his temper was well formed to assimilate with that of Dante. He was according to one, "of a philosophical and elegant mind, if he had not been too delicate and fastidious." Another terms him "a young and noble knight, brave and courteous, but of a lofty, scornful spirit, much addicted to solitude and study." He died, either in exile at Serrazana, or soon after his return to Florence, December 1300, during the spring of which year the action of this poem is supposed to be passing.

*At hearing of his son.* As Farinata and Dante are talking, Cavalcante, who is by the side of the latter, learning from their conversation that the visitor is Dante, his son's friend, raises himself up from his tomb, and asks Dante where his son Guido is, and why he is not with him. Dante replies :

Not of myself I come;  
By him\* who there expects me, through this clime  
Conducted, whom perchance Guido thy son  
Had in contempt."†

When Cavalcante heard the Dante use the past tense;

He at once  
Exclaimed, up-starting, "How saidst thou, he *had*?  
No longer lives he? Strikes not on his eye  
The blessed daylight?"

And he fell down supine, and appeared no more. Dante, however, filled with compunction at the cruelty of his silence, asks Farinata to inform Cavalcante that his son Guido is still living.

2. *Fue*, was. *The past tense 'fui.'* See note on the preceding line.

7. *Pale rages*, excitements of passionate feeling which make the face pale.

8. *Speaks itself in*, expresses itself by means of.

11. *Physiognomical of*, indicative of the character of. Physiognomy is the science which determines a person's character by the features of his face.

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\* Virgil, who was waiting for him a little way off.

† Guido was more given to philosophy than poetry, and may be supposed to have been no great admirer of Virgil.



12. *Whose words paint you a likeness*, who can describe persons and things with such vividness as to make you fancy you actually see them before you.

16. *Vital type*, essential qualities, as distinguished from the accidental.

20. *Worth*, that is, intellectual worth or excellence.

22. *Dwells in vague outwardness*, only gives us vague descriptions of the external or superficial character of things.

26. *Come out*, show itself ; make itself perceived.

29. *Surplusage*, superfluous or unnecessary qualities (*i. e.* qualities not necessary for the type of the thing).

34. *Brought with it*, that is, was naturally endowed with.

#### Page 21.

2. *As to the jaundiced they are yellow*. It is a popular belief, at least as old as the time of Lucretius, that to persons suffering from jaundice (a disease caused by diffusion of the biliary secretions in the blood and tissues, and characterised by yellowness of the eyes and skin) everything appears tinged with yellow. This is, however, only an occasional symptom. Compare Carlyle's words with Pope's :

"All seems infected that th' infected spy  
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye."

3. *Raphael* (1483—1520), a celebrated Italian painter, and by almost universal consent the greatest of modern painters. He was engaged in the embellishment of the Vatican, and painted several fine pieces for Francis I.

4. *Withal*, at the same time. *No most gifted eye*, no eye even the most gifted.

5. *Exhaust the significance of an object*, comprehend so fully the character or qualities of an object that absolutely nothing more remains of it.

7. *Take away with him*, transfer to his canvas ; delineate in a picture of it.

11. *Francesca and her Lover*. Francesca of Rimini, a daughter of Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna in the latter part of the thirteenth century. She was married to Lanciotto, son of Malatesta da Rimini, a brave but



deformed and hateful person, who, having discovered a criminal intimacy between her and his own brother Paolo, revenged himself by putting them both to death. The story of Francesca forms one of the most admired episodes in Dante's "Inferno," and has also been made the subject of a poem by Leigh Hunt.

12. *In that, in that picture, or description. Woven as out of rainbows, ethereally lovely as if woven out of rainbows.*

13. *On a ground of black, in the midst of woes and horrors. The poem describes the horrors of Hell, and of the punishment undergone by its inmates. In the midst of these descriptions, the episode of Francesco stands out like a lovely picture woven on a black ground. The metaphor is from weaving figures in cloth.*

13. *Flute voice, clear soft sweet voice resembling the sound of a flute.*

14. *Into our very heart of hearts, so as to penetrate to the innermost recesses of our hearts—to stir up the inmost feelings of our hearts.*

15. *A touch of womanhood, a dash of womanly feeling.*

16. *Della bella.....tolta, for that beautiful person (form) which has been taken away from me. Francesca tells Dante how she and Paolo fell in love:*

"Love, still to gentle hearts so near at hand,  
Seized him for that fair form that once was mine,  
Reft from me by an unforgotten brand.  
Love, which permits not that the loved decline  
To love, made him to me so close and dear,  
That as thou seest his lot is still with mine."

Other editions have "*Questa forma*" instead of this Italian quotation. *Questa forma* means "this form."

18. *Alti guai.* See p. 15, l. 17, and note.

19. *Aer bruno, dark or black air. Whirl them away.* The second circle of Hell where Dante meets Francesca and her lover is the place of punishment for carnal sinners, who are tossed about ceaselessly in the dark air by the most furious winds.

23-4. *Infinite pity.....law, that is, Dante's description of the punishment of Francesca and her lover shows that while he pitied them from the bottom of his heart, his*



notions of justice were so strict that he represents them as undergoing full punishment for their sins.

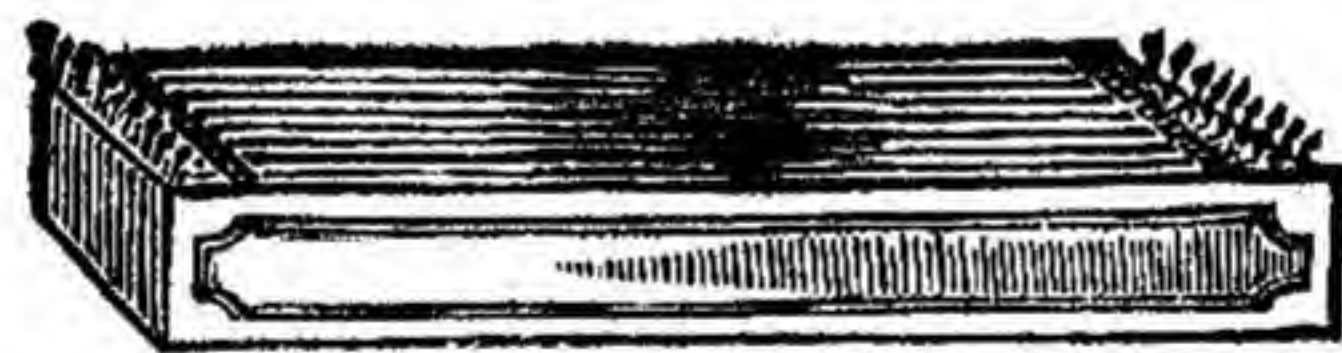
26. *Paltry notion*, silly idea. The allusion is to some critics who say that Dante wrote his *Divina Comedia*, simply in order to expose and defame his enemies.

27. *Splenetic*, dictated by spleen, *i. e.* spite or malice. *Impotent*, powerless—because the libel could do no harm, the persons libelled being dead.

33. *Egoistic*, arising from egoism, or the habit of referring all things to one's self, and of judging off everything by its relation to one's feelings or interests. Carlyle means that the man who does not know severity is weak-minded and sentimental, and he gives way to pity, simply because his sentimentality is gratified by the indulgence of that feeling. Such pity, says Carlyle, is worthless; it is the pity of one who can be severe when severity is required, that is worth anything. *Sentimentality*, excess of sentiment; a love of indulging the sentiments for their own sake; mawkishness.

#### Page 22.

3. *Æolian harp*, a musical instrument consisting of a box on or within which are stretched strings, on which the wind acts to produce music. It is usually placed at an open window.



#### ÆOLIAN HARP.

5. *Beatrice*. See *Introd. V. The "Paradiso."* The meeting is described not in the *Paradiso*, but in the *Purgatorio*, Canto XXXI. If Dante meant Paradise, the place, he should have omitted the article.

6. *Transfigured*, changed (from earthly into heavenly).

14. *On occasion*, when occasion arises; at times.

16. *It is the beginning of all*, moral greatness is the beginning of all other kinds of greatness.

18. *The inverse of his love*. That is, his scorn and hatred go as far in one direction as his love does in th



other : in other words, they are as deep as his love is high or sublime. *The converse of his love.* That is, his scorn and hatred are as great as the opposite feeling of love.

21. *Non ragionem, &c.* We will not speak of them.

25. *Sternly benign*, stern and benign—*stern*, because death is a tyrant we must submit to; *benign*, because it is a happy release from the miseries of life.

32. *Live with the antique prophets there*, read their books, and realize for ourselves the rigour, earnestness, and depth of feeling which were in them.

### Page 23.

2. *Byronism of taste*, a morbid taste for what is gloomy, melancholy, weird, horrible, or of similar character, which is characteristic of Byron's poetry.

6. *Mountain of Purification.* Purgatory is described as a highland hill with a steep and narrow winding path pent in on each side by rock. *Purgatory* means a place of purgation or purification.

11. *Tremolar dell' onde*, trembling of the waves. Dante issued out of Hell a little dawn into the pure air that surrounds the mountain-island of Purgatory.

“The dawn had chased the matin hour of prime,  
Which fled before, so that from afar  
I spied the trembling of the ocean-stream.”—(Cary.)

13. *The wandering Two*, Dante and Virgil.

15. *Hope.....sorrow.* Purgatory is a place of suffering, but that suffering prepares the soul for heaven. The souls in Purgatory get to Heaven, after longer or shorter periods of purification by suffering.

17. *Underfoot*, that is, in Hell from which they have ascended.

19. *Pray for me.* Roman Catholics believe that the prayers offered by the living on behalf of a soul in Paradise help to shorten the term of his suffering there.

20. *Tell my Giovanna, &c.* This was said by Nino di Gallura, nephew of Count Ugolino de' Gherardeschi, and betrayed by him. He tells Dante :

“When thou shalt be beyond the vast of waves,  
Tell my Giovanna, that for me she call



There, where reply to innocence is made.\*  
 Her mother, I believe, loves me no more;  
 Since she has changed the white and wimpled folds †  
 Which she is doomed once with grief to wish.‡

22. *They*, the denizens of the Mount of Pain, that is the souls in Purgatory.

23. *Corbel*, an ornamental projection, originally in the form of a basket (Ital. *corbello*, a small basket), used for supporting pillars or other superincumbent weights. Later the more ordinary form was that of a head, with the face looking downwards or outwards; or figure of a man with the knees crumpled up to the breast. *Bent-down like corbels*. "The circles of Purgatory are not like those of Hell, well-like in form, descending from the centre. They are ledges or cornices, with sometimes stairs, sometimes an ascent of broken rock on the hillside, leading from one to another, but all free to the sunshine and air." Dante thus describes the appearance of the souls in Purgatory as they were toiling up the winding path:

"As, to support incumbent floor or roof;  
 For corbel, is a figure sometimes seen,  
 That crumples up its knees unto its breast;  
 With the feign'd posture, stirring ruth unfeign'd  
 In the beholder's fancy; so I saw  
 These fashion'd, when I noted well their guise.  
 Each, as his back was laden, came indeed  
 Or more or less contrasted; and it seem'd  
 As he, who show'd most patience in his looks,  
 Wailing exclaim'd: 'I can endure no more.'"—(Cary.)

24. *Crushed-together*, crushed into a heap or lump. *For the sin of pride*. The proud and arrogant are described as weighed down by great stones which they carry on their backs as they toil up the path. These stones force them downwards with crushing weight till their faces almost touch the pavement of the ledge or cornice, so that they look the corbels of a building.

25-6. *In years, in ages and æons*, some in the course of years, others in the course of ages and æons. The Roman Catholics believe that all who get into Purgatory *will*

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\* That is, Heaven. † The weeds of widowhood. ‡ That is, she will wish herself a widow again, on account of her unhappy (second) marriage.



reach Heaven, sooner or later—it may take years, it may take centuries, it may take ages ; but reach Heaven they will. *Æon*, a period of time much longer than that denoted by *age*. The word is used in the sense of “an infinite, or almost infinite, period of time,” also of “an age.” Carlyle uses it here as expressing much more than *age*. “*Years, ages, æons*”—form a climax.

27. *By Mercy*, by the mercy of God ; by God in His mercy.

28. *When one has prevailed*, when one has succeeded in getting into Heaven.

29-30. *The whole mountain shakes, &c.* After Dante and Virgil pass the shade of Hugh Capet, the father of the French kings, they witness a sudden commotion. The entire mountain shakes ; and suddenly, with one voice, the spirits from all quarters pour forth a “Gloria in Excelsis” (“Glory to God in the Highest”—the song of the angels at the birth of Jesus Christ). They cannot understand what this means, and proceed on their way, but a shadow appears coming after them, and, on their inquiring the meaning of the tremor and shout, he explains that, neither earthquake nor storm ever reach the mountain, but that when a spirit finds itself sufficiently purified, all Purgatory trembles with joy and acclamation.

33. *The three compartments*, the three divisions of the Poem—*Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise*. *Mutually*—is redundant and should be omitted : the meaning of mutuality or reciprocity is contained in the phrase “one another.”

#### Page 24.

2. *The redeeming side of the “Inferno,”* what makes the *Inferno* pleasant to read, instead of being intolerably disagreeable, as it would be without the *Paradise*.

3—5. *Were, would be. Figured, represented. The Middle Ages*, the period from the 5th to the 15th century.

8. *Sent to sing*, sent by Heaven, with the mission to sing.

14. *The real world, as it is called*, the material or phenomenal world, which men wrongly call the real world. See note l. 15, and on p. 4, l. 4.



15. *Fact of a World*, the real world properly so called the Intelligible World. The following short account of the fundamental doctrine of the Platonic philosophy may interest the student :—

“ Plato believed God to be an infinitely wise, just, and powerful spirit ; and that he formed the visible universe out of pre-existent amorphous matter, according to perfect patterns or ideas eternally existent in his own mind. Philosophy he considered as being a knowledge of the true nature of things, as discoverable in those eternal words, it is the knowledge of what is eternal, exists necessarily and is unchangeable ; and of course it is not obtained through the senses ; neither is it the product of the understanding, which concerns itself only with the variable and the transitory ; nor is it the result of experience and observation, but it is the product of our *reason*, which, as partaking of the divine nature, has innate ideas of resembling the eternal ideas of God. By contemplating these innate ideas, reasoning about them, and comparing them with their copies in the visible universe, reason can attain that true knowledge of things which is called *philosophy*.”

18. *Be a spirit*—after he dies. *Is one*—in life (because he has a *soul* in him).

19 *It is all one visible Fact*, that is, he sees the past and future together—sees man not only as he is but also as he will be.

21. *I say again*—as I said before (pp. 17—22). *The saving merit*, the good quality which saves the poet from being rejected by the world.

26. *Like those Scandinavian ones the other day*, like the critics of recent times, who would explain away all Scandinavian mythology as a mere allegory. The following passage from the first Lecture (“The Hero as Divinity”) will illustrate Carlyle’s meaning :

Some speculators have a short way of accounting for the Pagan religion : mere quackery, priestcraft, and dupery, say they ; no sane man ever did believe it,—merely contrived to persuade other men, not worthy of the name of sane, to believe it ! It will be often our duty to protest against this sort of hypothesis about men’s doings and history ; and I here, on the very threshold protest against it in reference to Paganism, and to all other *isms* by which man has ever for a length of time striven to walk in this world. They have all had a truth in them, or men would not have taken them up. Quackery and dupery do abound ; in religions, above all, in the more advanced decaying stages of religions, they have fearfully abounded ; but quackery was never the originating influence



in such things; it was not the health and life of such things, but their disease, the sure precursor of their being about to die! Let us never forget this. It seems to me a most mournful hypothesis, that of quackery giving birth to any faith even in savage men. Quackery gives birth to nothing; gives death to all things. We shall not see into the true heart of anything, if we look merely at the quackeries of it; if we do not reject the quackeries altogether; as mere diseases, corruptions, with which our and all men's sole duty is to have done with them, to sweep them out of our thoughts as out of our practice. Man everywhere is the born enemy of lies. I find Grand Lamaism itself to have a kind of truth in it. Read the candid, clear-sighted, rather sceptical Mr. Turner's *Account of his Embassy* to that country, and see. They have their belief, these poor Thibet people, that Providence sends down always an Incarnation of Himself into every generation. At bottom some belief in a kind of Pope! At bottom still better, belief that there is a *Greatest Man*; that *he* is discoverable; that, once discovered, we ought to treat him with an obedience which knows no bounds! This is the truth of Grand Lamaism; the 'discoverability' is the only error here. The Thibet Priests have methods of their own of discovering what man is greatest, fit to be supreme over them. Bad methods: but are they so much worse than our methods,—of understanding him to be always the eldest-born of a certain genealogy? Alas, it is a difficult thing to find good methods for!—We shall begin to have a chance of understanding Paganism, when we first admit that to its followers it was, at one time, earnestly true. Let us consider it very certain that men did believe in Paganism; men with open eyes, sound senses, men made altogether like ourselves; that we, had we been there, should have believed in it. Ask now, what Paganism could have been.

Another theory, somewhat more respectable, attributes such things to Allegory. It was a play of poetic minds, say these theorists; a shadowing forth, in allegorical fable, in personification and visual form, of what such poetic minds had known and felt of this Universe. Which agrees, add they, with a primary law of human nature, still everywhere observably at work, though in less important things. That what a man feels intensely, he struggles to speak out of him, to see represented before him in visual shape, and as if with a kind of life and historical reality in it. Now doubtless there is such a law, and it is one of the deepest in human nature; neither need we doubt that it did operate fundamentally in this business. The hypothesis which ascribes Paganism wholly or mostly to this agency, I call a little more respectable; but I cannot yet call it the true hypothesis. Think, would *we* believe, and take with us as our life-guidance, an allegory, a poetic sport? Not sport but earnest is what we should require. It is a most earnest thing to be alive in this world; to die is not sport for a man. Man's life never was a sport to him; it was a stern reality, altogether a serious matter to be alive! I find, therefore, that though these Alle-



gory theorists are on the way towards truth in this matter, they have not reached it either. Pagan Religion is indeed an Allegory, a symbol of what men felt and knew about the Universe; and all Religions are symbols of that, altering always as that alters: but it seems to me a radical perversion an even *inversion* of the business, to put that forward as the origin and moving cause, when it was rather the result and termination. To get beautiful allegories, a perfect poetic symbol, was not the want of men; but to know what they were to believe about this Universe, what course they were to steer in it; what, in this mysterious Life of theirs, they had to hope and to fear, to do and to forbear doing. The *Pilgrim's Progress* is an Allegory, and a beautiful, just and serious one: but consider whether Bunyan's Allegory could have *preceded* the Faith it symbolises! The faith had to be already there, standing believed by everybody;—of which the Allegory could *then* become a shadow; and, with all its seriousness, we may say a *sportful* shadow, a mere play of the Fancy, in comparison with that awful Fact and scientific certainty, which it poetically strives to emblem. The allegory is the product of the certainty, not the producer of it; not in Bunyan's nor in any other case. For Paganism, therefore, we have still to inquire, Whence came that scientific certainty the parent of such a bewildered heap of allegories, errors and confusions? How was it and what was it?

29. *Or sublimest*, or the sublimest embodiment. [Insert a comma after *sublimest*].

32. *Polar elements*, elements on which all the other elements depend (just as the movements of the earth depend upon its poles).

33-4. *These two differ.....infinite*, the difference between Good and Evil does not consist in one being *preferable* to the other, but in the fact that one cannot exist along with the other: it is not a difference of kind or degree, but utter antagonism.

## Page 25.

2. *Gehenna*, Hell (in Hebrew and Syriac). *Gehenna*, or the valley of Hinnom, was just under the walls of the city of Sion. During the celebration of the rites and the offering of the human sacrifices to Moloch, drums and timbrels were beaten to drown the cries of the victims; it was thence called *Tophet*, from *toph*, a drum. In order to put a stop to the idolatry, the place was 'defiled' by Josiah; and so *Gehenna*, from the perpetual fire kept up there to consume the refuse of the city thrown into it,



became a "type of Hell," and is in the Syriac language used to express the place of punishment in the future state.

4. *Christianism*—an obsolete form of *Christianity*, to which however it is preferable, if we look to analogy : *Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Mahommedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Lamaism, Fetishism*, all have the suffix *ism*, and why should the name of the Christian religion have a different suffix ?

5. *Emblemed*, figured ; described by means of emblems or symbols.

7. *The other day*—namely, in his lecture on "The Heroes as Divinity." The following is the passage referred to :

What in such a time as ours it requires a Prophet or Poet to teach us, namely, the stripping-off of those poor undevout warp-pages, nomenclatures and scientific hearsays,—this, the ancient earnest soul, as yet unencumbered with these things, did for itself. The world, which is now divine only to be gifted, was then divine to whosoever would turn his eye upon it. He stood bare before it face to face. "All was Godlike or God :"—Jean Paul still finds it so ; the giant Jean Paul, who has power to escape out of hearsays : but then there were no hearsays. Canopus shining-down over the desert, with its blue diamond brightness (that wild blue spirit-like brightness, far brighter than we ever witness here), would pierce into the heart of the wild Ishmaelitish man, whom it was guiding through the solitary waste there. To his wild heart, with all feelings in it, with no *speech* for any feelings, it might seem a little eye, that Canopus, glancing-out on him from the great deep eternity ; revealing the inner splendour to him. Cannot we understand how these men *worshipped* Canopus ; became what we called Sabeans, worshipping the stars ? Such is to me the secret of all forms of Paganism. Worship is transcendent wonder ; wonder for which there is now no limit or measure ; that is worship. To these primeval men, all things and every thing they saw exist beside them were an emblem of the God-like, of some God.

And look what perennial fibre of truth was in that. To us also, through every star, through every blade of grass, is not a God made visible, if we will open our minds and eyes ? We do not worship in that was now : but is it not still reckoned a merit, proof of what we call a poetic nature ; that we recognise how every object has a divine beauty in it ; how every object still verily is 'a window through which we may look into infinitude itself' ? He that can discern the loveliness of things, we call him Poet, Painter, Man of Genius, gifted, loveable. These poor Sabeans did even what he does, in their own fashion. That they did it, in what fashion



soever, was a merit : better than what the entirely stupid man did, what the horse and camel did namely, nothing !

28. *The sensuous nature*, the part of human nature concerned in perception by the senses ; the powers of physical, as distinguished from moral, perception.

#### Page 26.

4. *Craftsman*, workman or artisan.

8. *Work with him*, that is, have prepared the materials on which he works, so as to enable him to complete what they began and had been working at.

10. *The thought they lived by*, the ideas which formed a part of their very being—was blended with their very lines.

16. *Dumb*, without power of expression ; unexpressed.

21. *Norse*, Scandinavian. The Scandinavian mythology deified the inanimate physical forces of Nature. Dante's Christianity converts moral forces into real entities.

22—4. '*Bastard Christianity*' spoken.....before. Dante refers to Mahomedanism, which Dante calls "a confused form of Christianity," and "a bastard kind of Christianity" in the following passages of his second lecture :

Islam is definable as a confused form of Christianity ; but Christianity has not been, neither had it been. Christianity also commands us, before all, to be resigned to God. We are to take no counsel with flesh-and-blood ; give ear to no vain cavils, vain sorrows and wishes : to know that we know nothing ; that the worst and cruellest to our eyes is not what it seems ; that we have to receive whatsoever befalls us as sent from God above, and say, It is good and wise, God is great ! "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Islam means in its way Denial of self, Annihilation of self. This is yet the highest Wisdom that Heaven has revealed to our Earth.....

Mahomet's creed we called a kind of Christianity ; and really, if we look at the wild rapt earnestness with which it was believed and laid to heart, I should say a better kind than that of those miserable Syrian sects, with their vain janglings about *Homoiousion* and *Homoousion* the head full of worthless noise, the heart empty and dead ! The truth of it is embedded in portentous error and falsehood ; but the truth of it makes it be believed, not the falsehood : it succeeded by its truth. A bastard kind of Christianity, but a living kind ; with a heart-life in it ; not dead, chopping barren



logic merely ! Out of all that rubbish of Arab idolatries, argumentative theologies, traditions, subtleties, rumours and hypotheses of Greeks and Jews, with their idle wire drawings, this wild man of the Desert, with his wild sincere heart, earnest as death and life, with his great flashing natural eyesight, had seen into the kernel of the matter. Idolatry is nothing; these wooden idols of yours, 'ye rub them with oil and wax, and the flies stick on them,'—these are wood, I tell you ! They can do nothing for you ; they are an impotent blasphemous pretence ; a horror and abomination, if he knew them. God alone is ; God alone has power ; he made us, He can kill us and keep us alive : ' *Allah akbar*, God is great.' Understand that His will is the best for you ; that howsoever sore to flesh-and-blood, you will find it the wisest, best : you are bound to take it so ; in this world and the next, you have no other thing that you can do.

*Bastard Christianity*, an illegitimate offspring of Christianity ; a debased form of Christianity. Mahommed is said to have compiled the Koran from materials taken from Judaism and Christianity. *Half-articulate*, in a confused or half-unintelligible manner.

31. *Of the day*, ephemeral ; lasting but a short time.

32. *Under the empire of mode*, changing according to the fashion of the time ; subject to changes.

## Page 27.

2. *A brotherhood*, an affinity of soul, or community of feeling, like that which exists between brothers.

5. *In St. Helena*. See note on p. 2, l. 21. During his imprisonment in St. Helena, Homer's *Iliad* was one of Napoleon's favourite books.

8. *Under a vesture.....ours*, thinking, feeling, and speaking in a manner quite different from ours.

17. *Pontificalities*, governments of Pontiffs or Pope ; Papacies. The usual form is *pontificates*.

18. *Never so lasting*, be it never so lasting ; though it be as lasting as it is possible for anything can be.

21. *Irrecognisable combinations*, combinations in which the constituent elements cannot be made out as they were originally.

31. *King Agamemnon*, king of Argos, and commander-in-chief of the allied Greeks who went to the siege of Troy. The fleet being delayed by adverse winds at Aulis,



he sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to Diana, and the winds at once became favourable. On his return home he was murdered by his wife.

**Page 28.**

3. *Life-roots*, vital or essential sources.

5. *In a way that 'utilities' cannot calculate*, in such a way that we cannot reckon its real value by the standard of practical utility or usefulness to mankind.

7. *The quantity of gas-light it saves*, the quantity of gas we should have to burn in the day-time if there were no Sun.

8. *Mahomet had his Arabians at*, that is, the Arabs, his followers, had pursued their conquests as far as. *As we saw*—in the Second Lecture.

15. *His arena*, his sphere of influence. *Arena* is properly the enclosed place in which the gladiatorial combats took place.

19. *Crudities*, immature or undeveloped ideas.

26. *Kindle themselves*, draw noble sentiments into their hearts; are fired, or inspired, with such sentiments.

29. *In this way.....again*, we may thus consider that on the whole they both exercise an equal amount of influence, the narrowness of Dante's sphere of influence being counterbalanced by the comparative shortness of Mahomet's period of influence, the nobleness and purity of the former by the extensiveness of the latter, and so on.

34. *Another than he*, namely, God.

**Page 29.**

2. *Caliph* (Arabic *khalifah*, a deputy), the chief sacerdotal dignitary among the Saracens or Mahomedans, vested with absolute authority in all matters relating both to religion and politics. It is at this day one of the Grand Seignior's titles, as successor of the Prophet; and of the Sophi of Persia, as successor of Ali. The government of the original Caliphs continued from the death of Mahomed till the 655th year of the Hegira, that is, from A.D. 632 to 1277.

4. *Which are a kind of distilled Newspapers*, which are compiled from newspapers by condensation, so as to contain their essence in a small compass.



9. *Got no furtherance from*, was not in any way furthered or promoted by.

10. *Scimitars*, short curved swords used by the Arabs, Turks and Persians. *How many scimitars he drew*, that is, how many battles he fought.

11. *Piasters*. The *piaster* or *piastre* was originally a Spanish silver coin, which has been extensively adopted by other nations. It was of about the value of the American dollar. The Turkish piastre was worth about 3s. 6d. in 1753, but has since gradually and rapidly deteriorated till at the present time it is worth only about  $2\frac{1}{8}$ d. The Egyptian piastre is worth about  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. Fifty and hundred piastre pieces are struck in gold. Perhaps these are what Carlyle means by "gold piastres." In Arabian tales we read of gold *sequins*, but not gold piastres. *Pocketed*, he pocketed.

12. *Blaring*, bellowing or roaring; loud noise. We speak of a man who has made himself famous or notorious, that he has made a great deal of noise in the world, *i. e.*, got spoken of far and wide.

13. *Inanity*, inane or empty thing. *Futility*, futile, insignificant, or worthless thing.

15-6. *The great empire of Silence*, that is, the great men who have conferred great and lasting good to humanity without any noise or ostentation. *The boundless treasury*, &c., namely, the great benefit which heroes like Dante have conferred on humanity.

19. *These loud times*, these days when there is so much vaunting and ostentation.

23. *Its Inner Life*, the intellectual, moral, and religious life of the people of modern Europe.

25. *Humours*. Carlyle apparently uses the word in the peculiar sense in which it was used in Shakespeare's time. The following extract from Nares's Glossary will explain this meaning.

"The use, or rather the abuse, of this word, in the time of Shakespeare and Jonson, was excessive: what are properly called the *manners* in real or fictitious characters being then denominated the *humours*. But it was applied on all occasions with little either of judgment or wit; every coxcomb had it in his mouth, and every particularity which he could affect was termed his humour. Shakespeare has abundantly ridiculed this in the foolish character of



Nym; and Jonson has given it a serious attack in the induction to his play '*Every Man out of his Humour*,' which bears witness to the popularity of the term. Jonson says that he introduces the subject—

'To give these ignorant well-spoken days  
Some taste of their abuse of this word humour.'

This, it is answered, cannot but be acceptable—

'Chiefly to such as have the happiness  
Daily to see how the poor innocent word  
Is rack'd and tortur'd.'

He then proceeds to a long and serious definition of the word, which with a good deal of logical affectation, he rightly deduces from the original sense, moisture.....[So, in *Bartholomew Fair*, ii. 1, Knockem is small to use the word *vapour* much as Nym uses *humour*.] Shakespeare's attack is made in a pleasanter way, and is so much the more effectual, as, in such cases, ridicule is better than reproof. The following may serve as a specimen:

'And this is true: I like not the *humour* of lying: he hath wrong'd me in some *humours*: I should have borne the humour'd letter to her; but I have a sword and it shall bite upon necessity. Adieu, I have not the *humour* of bread and cheese: and there's the *humour* of it.'

On which curious harangue, Page exclaims, 'The humour of it! here's a fellow frights *humour* out of its wits.' *M. W. of W.*, ii. 1, [132--143]. Shakespeare gives us here the key to his strange character of Nym, which was evidently meant to exemplify the absurd abuse of that word. Nym also affects sententious brevity of speech, which was another prevalent folly, and is attributed to him in *H. V.*, iii. 2. Without these particular objects, the character would have been, perhaps, too absurd. Pistol also should be considered not as a mere imaginary character, but as a fellow whose head is crammed with fragments of plays, and intended by the author as a vehicle for his ridicule of many absurd and bombastic passages in those of his predecessors."—*Nares (Glossary)*.

26. *Looking at the world*, observing men and things.

27-8. *In Homer.....Greece*, by reading the *Iliad* we can make out the character of ancient Greek society.

30. *In Faith and in Practice*. As Dante's poem reflects the faith, and Shakespeare's plays the practice, of the Middle Ages, it would be better to transpose *Shakespeare* and *Dante* in l. 28. From a chronological point of view too, this order would be better.

### Page 30.

1. *The chivalry way of life*, the mode of life which was followed in the age of chivalry.



4. *Sovereign poet*, king of poets. *Perennial*, increasing or perpetual—literally continuing through the year.

7. *The central fire of the world*. As we go below the earth's surface, we reach a depth beyond which the interior of the earth seems to have no sympathy with the external causes of heat or cold, and its heat appears to be its own, and to increase according to a fixed law the deeper we descend. The average rate of increase is  $1^{\circ}$  Fahr. for a descent of between 40 and 50 feet, and if this law were universal—which we do not know it to be—at a depth of less than 30 miles the heat would be such as to hold in fusion all known substances, and the earth would have to be regarded as a very thin crust or shell full of molten matter. This theory of a central heat was commonly held till lately, being endorsed by philosophers like Humbolt and Fourier; but has been proved to be irreconcilable with the phenomena of the precession of the equinoxes.

9. *World-voice*, person who sang for the world to hear, not for any particular country or nation.

12. *Curious enough*, it is curious enough.

14. *Self-sufficient*, relying on one's resources and powers.

15. *The Warwickshire squire*, Sir Thomas Lucy: see l. 25 and note. The allusion is to the story, now generally discredited, that Shakespeare when at Stratford, was prosecuted by Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote for deer-stealing. The story goes that Shakespeare revenged himself by lampooning Sir Thomas Lucy, and that he left Stratford for London to avoid prosecution for it. Sir Thomas Lucy is the person celebrated by Shakespeare for all time as "Justice Shallow," whom he places in the reign of Henry IV, though he lived in that of Elizabeth.

19. *Strange out-budding*, singular development.

22. *Igdrasil*, or *Yggdrasil*, in Scandinavian mythology, is the great ash-tree, which binds together heaven, earth and hell. Its branches extend over the whole earth, its top reaches heaven, and its roots are fixed in hell. The three Nornas or Fates sit under the tree spinning the events of man's life. At the root of the tree lies a great serpent with a numerous brood of smaller ones, who strive to undermine it, while the branches are as constantly refreshed by water poured over them by



the Nornas. By "the Tree Igdrasil" Carlyle means the universe as subject to the law of growth, development, and decay, in endless succession. See extract in the note on ll. 31—4.

25. *Not a Sir Thomas.....him*, that is, when in the course of events the time comes for a man of a particular character to come into the world and play his destined part in its history, one is sure to appear. Shakespeare was born a great poet; but if he had remained all his life at Stratford, he would never be distinguished himself as such. It was necessary that some one should drive him to London, and that person appeared at the proper time in Sir Thomas Lucy to bring about that event.

29. *Stellar systems*, systems of stars. From the appearances connected with the Milky Way, Sir William Herschel came to the conclusion that the stars forming our firmament do not extend indefinitely into space, but are limited in all directions, the mass having a definite shape. But the star system, which we may call our own, as our Sun belongs to it, is but an item in the stellar universe. The appearances known as Nebulæ are believed to be similar agglomerations of suns separated from our system and from one another by unfathomable distances; that is, they are "stellar, or star, systems."

30. *Sprung out of all men*, evolved out of the collective thought, speech, and action of the whole human race in the past and the present.

31—4. *It is all a Tree, &c.* The following passage from the First Lecture will make the meaning of this sentence clear.

I like, too, that representation they have of the Tree Igdrasil. All Life is figured by them as a Tree. Igdrasil, the Ash-tree of Existence, has its roots deep-down in the kingdoms of Hela or Death; its trunk reaches up heaven-high, spreads its boughs over the whole Universe: it is the Tree of Existence. At the foot of it, in the Death-Kingdom, sit Three Nornas, Fates,—the Past, Present, Future; watering its roots from the sacred well. Its 'boughs,' with their buddings and disleafings,—events, things suffered, things done, catastrophes,—stretch through all lands and times. Is not every leaf of it a biography, every fibre there an act or word? Its boughs are Histories of Nations. The rustle of it is the noise of Human Existence, on words from of old. It grows there, the breath



of Human Passion rustling through it ;—or stormtost, the storm-wind howling through it like the voice of all the gods. It is Igdrasil, the Tree of Existence. It is the past, the present and the future ; what was done, what is doing, what will be done ; 'the infinite conjugation of the verb *To do*.' Considering how human things circulate, each inextricably in communion with all, —how the word I speak to you to-day is borrowed, not from Ulfila the Mœsogoth only, but from all men since the first man began to speak,—I find no similitude so true as this of a Tree. Beautiful ; altogether beautiful and great. The '*Machine of the Universe*,'—alas, do but think of that in contrast !

### Page 31.

1. *Talon*, claw-like ends of roots, by which they fix themselves in the soil.

3. *Hela*, in Scandinavian mythology, the goddess of the infernal regions, and queen of the dead, who dwelt beneath one of the three roots of the Tree Igdrasil. She was the daughter of Loki by a giantess. The All-Father (God), knowing that she and her brothers (the wolf Ferir, and the serpent Jormundgand) would prove a source of great calamity, resolved upon their destruction, cast the serpent into the deep ocean, and hurled Hel into Niflheim (the nether world) over which he gave her authority, and in which she was to assign places to all who die of sickness and age. Hel was inexorable and would never release any one who had once entered her domain.

8. *Flowerage*, (metaphorically) development or result.

13. *The soul of Practice*, that which underlies, and is essential to Practice ; that which forms the foundation of Practice.

16. *Abolished*—in England (at the Reformation).

21. *Taking small.....Parliament*, caring little for the Acts of Parliament which had abolished the Catholicism with which she equipped him when she sent him forth into the world.

22. *King Henrys and Queen Elizabeths*, monarchs like Henry VIII and Elizabeth. *Henry VIII* (1491—1547), succeeded his father, at the age of 19. The first years of his reign were very popular, owing to his generosity and manly bearing, but at length his conduct grew capricious and arbitrary. The Emperor Maximilian and Pope Julius II, having leagued against France, persuaded Henry to



join them, and he, in consequence, invaded that kingdom, where he made some conquests. About the same time, James IV, King of Scotland, invaded England, but was defeated and slain at Flodden Field. Cardinal Wolsey succeeded in bringing Henry over from the imperial interests to that of the French king. When Luther commenced his reformation in Germany, Henry wrote a book against him, for which he was complimented by the Pope with the title of Defender of the Faith. This attachment to the Roman see, however, did not last long. Impelled either by conscience, policy, or a passion for Anne Boleyn, he sought a divorce from his wife, Katharine of Arragon, to whom he was married eighteen years. His plea for the divorce was that Katharine was his brother Arthur's widow. The divorce being delayed by the Pope, who, surrounded by perplexities, pursued a policy of procrastination, in which he was encouraged by Wolsey, the crisis which might have otherwise been postponed, was precipitated. Wolsey was deprived of his power, and after a while, Henry assumed the title of Supreme Head of the English church, put down the monasteries, and alienated their possessions to secular purposes. His marriage with Anne Boleyn took place in the meantime, but she was afterwards sent to the scaffold, to which she was condemned for offences said to have been proved; but her guilt or innocence is a matter of discussion to the present day. On Anne's death, Lady Jane Seymour was elevated to the throne; she died in childbed with Prince Edward (afterwards Edward VI). He next married Anne of Cleves; but she not proving agreeable to his expectations, he put her away. His next wife was Catherine Howard, who was beheaded for adultery; after which he espoused Catherine Parr, who survived him. *Queen Elizabeth*, of England (1538—1603), was the daughter of Henry VIII by Anne Boleyn. She was educated in the Protestant religion, and in the reign of her sister Mary, she was sent to the Tower, and the warrant for her execution was actually prepared, but the fear of the popular commotion her death would cause, saved her life, and she was afterwards removed to Woodstock, where she was kept till 1555, and then taken to the royal palace of Hat-



field. On the death of her sister in 1558, she was proclaimed queen. The first measures of her reign were to send succours to the reforming party in Scotland, and to give her assistance to the French Huguenots. Dudley, Earl of Leister, became her favourite, and had the ambition to aspire to her hand, and no doubt would have gained it, had not the influence of Burleigh and the other ministers been more powerful than the Queen's own inclinations. In 1568, Mary, Queen of Scots fled to England, but being a Catholic, and having offended Elizabeth, she was taken prisoner, and after being kept many years in confinement, was at last beheaded in Fotheringay Castle. The French and Spaniards having formed a league for the extirpation of heresy, Elizabeth was induced to protect the Protestants, and her assistance was of great effect in bringing about the separation of united Provinces from the dominion of Philip II., who in 1588 sent against England his famous Armada, to which the Pope gave the appellation of Invincible. It consisted of 130 vessels, carrying 2,431 pieces of artillery, and 4,575 quintals of powder, and manned with about 27,000 soldiers and seamen. To oppose this formidable force, Elizabeth had 181 ships, manned by about 18,000 sailors. The English fleet, however, assisted by the winds, prevented the Spaniards from landing, and the boasted Armada was destroyed. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, who commanded the Spaniard fleet, escaped with no more than 60 sail out of his whole fleet, and these were very much shattered. In this same year, Leicester, her favourite, died, and Robert Devereux, Earl of Sussex, took his place; but this nobleman, on account of treason, was executed in 1601. After this event, Elizabeth seems to have become weary of the world, for she never recovered the shock which the signing of the death-warrant of Essex gave her. The last weeks of her life were passed in a great state of mental prostration. *Go their way*, follow the career which their own ideas and inclinations point to them; act according to their own opinions and wishes.

23. *Hers*, her way; that is, her appointed way or course (which is regulated by immutable laws).



25. *Debate at St. Stephen's*, Parliamentary debate. *St. Stephen's* was a chapel in Westminster built by King Stephen. Edward III rebuilt it, and raised it to the rank of a collegiate church. About 1548, it was applied to the use of Parliament, which met there. It was destroyed by fire, in 1834, and the new Houses of Parliament were begun on the site of old Westminster Palace and *St. Stephen's* in 1840 and completed in 1857. The Houses of Parliament are still spoken of as *St. Stephen's*.

26. *Hustings*, the platform from which candidates for membership of Parliament address the electors. It may be remarked that Carlyle inaccurately speaks of *debates* on the hustings; no debates are held on the hustings, but only speeches are made from it.

27. *Freemason's Tavern*, (or Freemasons' Hall) a building in Great Queen Street, not far from Lincoln's Inn Fields, which is the head-quarters of Freemasonry in England. Public dinners are often given in this building.

29. *Jangling*, wrangling, debating.

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2. *Look at that side of matters too*, consider the thing from that point of view as well.

5. *Idolatrously*, with a feeling of excessive veneration, bordering on worship.

10. *In our recorded world*, in our world so far as we have records of it; in the historical portion of our world's life.

11. *In the way of literature*, as a man of letters, or author.

19. '*Faculties*' as they are called. See p. 35, l. 32—p. 36, l. 27.

20. *Bacon, Francis, Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans* (1561—1626), an illustrious philosopher and eminent statesman, the Father of Inductive and Experimental Philosophy. At the age of twenty-eight, he was made a Queen's Counsellor and attached himself to the Earl of Essex. This nobleman treated him with great kindness, which Bacon however repaid with the basest ingratitude. Pope alludes to this when he calls Bacon the "wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind." He held several high appointments and eventually rose to the High Chancellor-



ship, and was created Baron Verulam, and soon afterwards Viscount of St. Albans. In 1620, he gave to the world the greatest of all his works "*Novum Organum*," which was immediately hailed with the warmest expression of admiration by the greatest minds of Europe, and which is "the central pile of that edifice of Philosophy on which the world has bestowed his name," [*Baconian*, i. e., Inductive, Philosophy]. He had now reached the zenith of his glory, when he was accused in Parliament of bribery and corruption. He admitted the charge and was sentenced to a heavy fine and imprisonment during the King's pleasure. He was soon restored to liberty, and he went into retirement and devoted the rest of his life to his studies. He died from an illness contracted in making an experiment on the effects of cold in preventing putrefaction. His celebrated "*Essays*" were published in 1597, and his "*Advancement of Learning*" in 1605. Bacon also wrote *The New Atlantis*, *Apophthegms*, and *Wisdom of the Ancients*. The style of Bacon is highly ornamental, abounding with metaphors. It is also very concise and terse, every sentence being compact with thought. *Novum Organum* ("The New Instrument," that is, for the investigation of Truth) the second part of Bacon's great projected work, the *Instauratio Magna*, published in 1620. This and the *Advancement of Learning*, form the foundation of the Baconian philosophy, the *Novum Organum* being a description of the new method "by which the writer argued that the undertaking should be employed in adding to human knowledge." This theory is stated in the opening aphorism: "Man, who is the servant and interpreter of Nature, can act and understand no further than he has, either in operation or contemplation, observed of the method or order of nature."

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11. *Task*, impose a task or work upon; demand the exercise or application of.

16. *Embodiment*, entanglement; confusion or disorder.

17. *Fiat lux*. (Lat.) Let there be light. When God created the heaven and the earth, "the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of



the deep...And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Genesis I, i, 1—3).

18. *Chaos*, in the ancient cosmogonies, the vacant and infinite space which existed before the creation of the world, and out of which gods, men, and all things rose. Milton describes chaos as a vast space in which the rude undigested materials, out of which God created the universe lay thrown together in a state of utter confusion.

21. *Portrait-painting*. See p. 20, l. 5, and note.

24. *Perspicacity*, acuteness of sight or discernment.

27. *Its generic secret*, the hidden qualities which are common to all objects of the class to which it belongs, and which form the essence of the thing.

#### Page 34.

3. *Twisted*, squeezed into a particular shape (and reflecting distorted images). *Convex-concave mirror*, mirror which is convex on one side, and concave on the other.

4. *Convexities and concavities*, elevations and depressions of surface; peculiarities or singularities. Carlyle means that Shakespeare's delineations are not coloured by any oddities of opinion and sentiment of his own mind.

9. *Falstaff*, Sir John Falstaff, a famous character in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV*. In the former he is represented as in love with Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, who make a butt and a dupe of him; in the latter he figures as a soldier and a wit, the boon-companion of Henry, Prince of Wales, afterwards Henry V. In both cases, he is a mountain of fat, sensual, boastful, mendacious, and fond of practical jokes.

*Othello*, a Moor of Venice, in Shakespeare's play of the same name. He marries Desdemona, the daughter of a Venetian senator, and is led by his ensign, Iago, a consummate villain, to distrust her fidelity and virtue, and finally to kill her; not, however, in jealousy, properly speaking, but, as Coleridge says, "in a conviction forced upon him by the almost superhuman art of Iago,—such a conviction as any man would and must have entertained, who had believed Iago's honesty, as Othello did."

*Juliet*, daughter of Lady Capulet of Verona, in love with Romeo, son of Montague, between whose family and



the Capulets there was irreconcilable enmity. In order that Juliet might get away from her house, and meet Romeo at the cell of Friar Lawrence, she took a sleeping draught, so that she might be supposed to be dead, and placed in the family vault, whence she might go to Friar Lawrence's cell and be married to Romeo. Romeo goes to the vault, and sees her lying unconscious, and, thinking her dead poisons himself; she wakes, and finding him dead, poisons herself also.

*Coriolanus*, a Roman general, defeated the Volsci frequently, and took from them Corioli, whence he received the name of Coriolanus. Afterwards he tried to gain the consulship, but as his haughty character was offensive to the people, he failed. In revenge, he proposed measures hostile to the people, and endeavoured to prevent the corn sent by Gelo, in a time of scarcity, from being distributed gratuitously to the Plebeians. He was punished by the tribunes, who condemned him to exile (491 A. C.). Irritated, Coriolanus went to offer his services to the Volsci, at the head of whose troops he soon appeared before Rome. The Romans, alarmed, sent to him several embassies, but he was deaf to their prayers. He was on the point of carrying the place by assault, when Veturia his mother, followed by his wife and the Roman ladies, entered his presence, and implored him to spare his country. Softened by the tears of his mother, Coriolanus consented to raise the siege. Shortly after he perished, it is said, being assassinated by the Volsci. Others, however, say that he lived to a great old age.

27. *Were discernible*, would be discernible.

30. *Relate yourself to them*, establish a relationship with them; that you and they are related to one another (as parts of one whole).

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3. *A Poet in act*, one whose actions are all prompted and controlled by true poetic feeling.

13-4. *The primary outfit...soever*, something with which a man must be naturally endowed if he is to become a Hero at all, no matter of what class.



17. *Jingling sensibilities against each other*, expressing poetic sentiments in jingling or rhyming lines. See p. 16, l. 28, and note.

21. *Crabbed*, of sour or surly temper. We have not been able to ascertain the allusion to the school master here.

27. *Entirely fatal person*, a person whose fate makes it utterly impossible for him to fulfil the function for which he is proposed. Carlyle means that unless a man is born a dunce, he can qualify himself, to a greater or less extent, for any position in life.

### Page 36.

1. *A capital error*, an error of the first class; a very great error.

7-8. *Words ought not.....us*, from continually speaking of some non-existent thing as a reality, the idea of its reality must not gradually grow upon us, and become fixed in our minds. Carlyle refers to the influence of language on our ideas and beliefs. By constantly speaking of some thing which does not exist as if it existed, we are liable gradually to come to think that it does exist. There is a tendency to think that there being a name, there must be something of which it is the name. As Trench says: "The reactive energy of words not only on the passions of men, but on their opinions calmly and deliberately expressed, would furnish a very curious chapter in the history of human knowledge and human ignorance.

17. *Physiognomically related*, related in such a way that each of them indicates the character of the rest. *Physiognomically*, as an index to the character of the rest, as each feature of a man's face is an index to some feature of his character.

22. *Physiognomical of him*, indicative of his character.

32. *What we can call knowing*, in the true sense of the word *know*.

### Page 37.

2. *Stand by*, adhere to or maintain. *The dangerous-true*, that which is true, and the maintaining of which involves danger.



3. *Pusillanimous*, literally, little-minded; having no courage.

6. *A sealed book*, a thing which they cannot obtain a knowledge of. The metaphor is a familiar one.

10. *The human Reynard*, the man who has the qualities of a fox. *Reynard*, the name given to a fox in fables or familiar tales and in poetry. It is derived from the celebrated German beast-epic ("Thier-epos") entitled "*Reinecke Fuchs*," or "*Reinhard Fuchs*," which is a satire on the state of society in Germany during the Middle Ages and the feudal regime, originated at an unknown period among the Frankish tribes, and first made known through the medium of a Low German version in the fifteenth century.

14. *Vulpine morality*, morality suited to a fox. (Lat. *vulpes*, a fox).

16. *Splenetic*, spiteful or malicious. *Atrabiliar*, or *atrabilious*—the Latin equivalent of the Greek *melancholy*.

19. *Practicability*, a practical instead of a speculative turn of mind.

25. *Baleful*, mischievous; pernicious.

33. *Novalis*, Friederich von Novalis (1772—1802), was a native of Prussian Saxony and son of Baron von Hardenburg. His principal works were "*Lehringe zu Sais*" (Disciples at Sais); "*Heinrich von Ofterdingen*," which he did not live to finish, and "*Hymnen an die Nacht*" (Hymns to the Night). He is best known by his literary pseudonym of "*Novalis*." He died of consumption at the early age of 31.

## Page 38.

2. *Artifice*, skill in contriving.

24. *Speech is great but silence is greater*. Compare the German proverb: "Speech is silver, but silence is gold."

31. *Those Sonnets of his*. "What was his aim in writing them? and what, as a body, do they mean? The answers to these are various. The theory held by Dyce and Morley is that they were "composed in an assumed character on different subjects, and at different times, for the amusement, if not at the suggestion, of the author's intimate associates (hence described by Meres [in his *Palladis*



*Tamias*, 1598] as "his sugred sonnets among his private friends;" and though these waters "do not deny that one or two" of the sonnets "reflect Shakespeare's genuine feelings," they contend that "allusions scattered through the whole series are not to be hastily referred to the personal circumstances of Shakespeare." Somewhat allied to this notion is the opinion that some of the sonnets were addressed by the poet to Southampton, others to Southampton in Elizabeth Vernon's name; whilst a few again were addressed in Southampton's name to Lady Rich. This was first partly broached by Mrs. Jamieson, and afterwards fully argued by Gerald Massey, in *The Quarterly Review* (1864), and still more elaborately in a separate publication by that writer (1870), "The peculiarity of Henry Brown's interpretation," says Dowden, who himself expands the autobiographical theory, "is that he discovers in the sonnets the intention of Shakespeare to parody or jest as the fashionable love-poetry and love-philosophy of the day." This view is partially adopted by Delius and Friesen. The autobiographical theory has certainly an imposing array of names on its side. Besides Dowden, there are Drake, Gervinus, Kreyssig, Boaden, Bright, the two Browns, Hallam, and Furnivall. To these must be added the still more powerful support of Coleridge, who says "the sonnets could only have come from a man deeply in love, and in a love with a woman;" and of Wordsworth, who declares them to be the expression of Shakespeare's *own feelings* in his *own person*."

### Page 39.

3. *Offhand*, impromptu, without preparation or effort; unpremeditatedly.

5. *Deer-poaching*. See p. 13, l. 16, and note.

8. *Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark, the hero of the tragedy of that name. He is pre-eminently a man of mind but not of action. He meditates how to avenge the death of his father, who has been poisoned by his uncle, now his stepfather; but while wasting his energy in speculation, he accepts a challenge from Læertes to a friendly contest; but Laertes uses a poisoned rapier, and Hamlet dies. *Mac-*



*beth*, in the tragedy of the same name, is Thane of Glamis and cousin of Duncan, king of Scotland. He murders Duncan and usurps the throne, which he has been led to expect by the prophecy of certain witches who met him on a heath on his return from a victory. On a second visit to them, they assured him that "none of woman-born" should kill him, and that he should not die till Birnamwood came to Dunsinane. He was slain in battle by Macduff, thane of Fife, who had been born "from his mother's womb untimely ripped" (*i.e.* brought into the world by a Cæsarian operation); as for the wood, Macduff's soldiers, in their march to Dunsinane through Birnamwood, were commanded to cut boughs of the forest and carry them before them to conceal their numbers.

13. *Objurgations*, denunciations or reproofs.

15. *In measure*, temperate; not going beyond due bounds.

16. *Good hater*, one who hates withal the strength of his mind, not in a half-hearted way. Dr. Johnson used to say that he liked a good hater.

19. *The butt he is bantering*, the person against whom his banter is directed; the person whom he is holding up to ridicule—a metaphor from shooting at a butt or target.

20. *Horse-play*, rude or rough play.

27-8. *The crackling of thorns under the pot*, noisy silly laughter. The words are from the Bible: "As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool" (*Ecclesiastes*, VII, 6). The simile is taken from burning twigs of thorny trees for cooking: they make a great noise and blaze, but presently waste themselves, and go out without making any considerable effect upon the meat in the pot.

30. *Dogberry*, an ingeniously absurd, self satisfied, and loquacious night-constable, in Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing."

*Verges*, a watchman and night-constable, in Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," noted for his blundering simplicity.

34. *Presidents of the City-watch*, officers in the force of city-watchmen. Dogberry is a constable, and Verges a



head-borough (also a kind of constable), and the night watchmen of the city (Messina) are under their orders.

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6. AS "HAMLET" IN "WILHELM MEISTER" IS. The following is Goëthe's criticism of *Hamlet* in *Wilhelm Meister*.

"I sought for every indication of what the character of Hamlet was before the death of his father; I took note of all that this interesting youth had been, independently of the subsequent terrible occurrences, and I imagined what he might have been without them.

Tender and nobly descended, this royal flower grew up under the direct influences of majesty; the idea of the right and of princely dignity, the feeling for the good and the graceful, with the consciousness of his high birth, were unfolded in him together. He was a prince, a born prince. Pleasing in figure, polished by nature, courteous from the heart, he was to be the model of youth and the delight of the world. . . .

Figure to yourself this youth, this son of princes, conceive him vividly, bring his condition before your eyes, and then observe him when he learns that his father's spirit walks; stand by him in the terrible night when the venerable Ghost itself appears before him. A horrid shudder seizes him; he speaks to the mysterious form; he sees it beckon him; he follows it and hearkens. The fearful accusation of his uncle rings in his ears; the summons to revenge and the piercing reiterated prayer, "Remember me."

And when the ghost has vanished, who is it we see standing before us? A young hero panting for vengeance? A born prince, feeling himself favoured in being summoned to punish the usurper of his crown? No! Amazement and sorrow overwhelm the solitary young man; he becomes bitter against smiling villains, swears never to forget the departed, and concludes with the significant ejaculation:

"The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!"

In these words, I imagine, is the key to Hamlet's whole procedure, and to me it is clear that Shakespeare sought to depict a great deed laid upon a soul unequal to the performance of it. In this view I find the piece composed throughout. Here is an oak-tree planted in a costly vase, which should have received into its bosom only lovely flowers; the root spread out, the vase is shivered to pieces.

A beautiful, pure, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, sinks beneath a burden which it can neither bear nor throw off; every duty is holy to him,—this too hard. The impossible is required of him,—not the impossible in itself, but the impossible to him. How he winds, turns, agonizes, advances, and recoils, loses his purpose from his thoughts, without ever again recovering his peace of mind. . . .



It pleases, it flatters us greatly, to see a hero who acts of himself, who loves and hates us as his heart prompts, undertaking and executing, thrusting aside all hindrances, and accomplishing a great purpose. Historians and poets would fain persuade us that so proud a lot may fall to man. In *Hamlet* we are taught otherwise; the hero has no plan, but the piece is full of plan. Here is no villain upon whom vengeance is inflicted according to a certain scheme, rigidly and in a peculiar manner carried out. No, a horrid deed occurs; it sweeps on its consequences, dragging the guiltless along with; the perpetrator appears as if he would avoid the abyss to which he is destined, and he plunges just then when he thinks happily to fulfil his career. For it is the property of a deed of horror that the evil spreads out over the innocent, as it is of a good action to extend its benefits to the undeserving, while frequently the author of one of the other is neither punished nor rewarded. Here in this play of ours, how strange! Purgatory sends its spirit, and demands revenge; in vain! Neither earthy nor infernal things may bring about what is reserved for Fate alone. The hour of judgment comes. The bad falls with the good. One race is mowed away, and another springs up..... *Hamlet* is endowed more properly with sentiment than with a character; it is events alone that push him on; and accordingly the piece has somewhat the amplification of a novel. But as it is Fate that draws the plan, as the piece proceeds from a deed of terror, and the hero is steadily driven on to a deed of terror, the work is tragic in its highest sense, and admits of no other than a tragic end."

*Wilhelm Meister*, a philosophical novel by Goëthe, which is considered the first true German novel. The author says of it:

"The critic seeks a central point [to this romance], which, in truth, is hard to find. I should think a rich manifold life brought close to our eyes might suffice, without any determined moral tendency which could be reasoned upon. But, if this is insisted upon, it may perhaps be found in what Frederick, at the end, says to the hero, 'Thou seemest to me like Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom!' For what does the whole say, but that man, despite all his follies, and errors, led by a higher hand, reaches some higher aim at last?"

8. *August William Schlegel*, a German critic and poet (1767—1845). He studied at Gottingen, under Heyne, and made himself known by an excellent translation of Shakespeare. He also translated several pieces of Calderon, and, together with his brother Frederick, established a literary journal, entitled the "*Athenæum*", which became very popular. He delivered at Berlin, in 1801, and



at Vienna, in 1808, some lectures on literature, which related principally to that of the ancients and gained for him a place among the first critics. His "Comparison of the *Phædra* of Racine with that of Euripides" occasioned some scandal in France. Schlegel discovered the old national poem of the "Niebelungen Leid," and published some "Lectures on Dramatic Literature." In 1818 he was appointed Literary Professor at Bonn, and in the same year published an "Essay on Provencal Literature." In the latter part of his life he devoted himself especially to the study of Indian literature, and translated two great Indian poems, the "Ramayana" and the "Hitopadesa." He was himself the author of some highly esteemed poems. Schlegel was on intimate terms with Madame de Stael, and was the friend of Goëthe and Schiller.

11. *Marlborough*, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650—1722), an illustrious English general and statesman. He served with great distinction under the great Turenne in the Netherlands from 1672 to 1657. In 1685 he was created Lord Churchill, and soon afterwards materially aided in suppressing Monmouth's rebellion. He continued to serve King James with great fidelity till the arrival of William of Orange; whereupon he went over to that prince, an act of treachery which has been stigmatised by several writers, perhaps unjustly, as fraught with base ingratitude. King William created him Earl of Marlborough in 1689, and appointed him Commander-in-Chief of the English army in the Low Countries. He next served in Ireland, and reduced Cork, with other strong places. But in 1692 he was suddenly dismissed from his employments, and committed to the Tower; whence, however, he was soon released. After the death of Queen Mary, he was restored to favour; and at the close of that reign he had the command of the English forces in Holland, and was appointed ambassador extraordinary to the States, who chose him captain-general of their forces. On his return to England, he was made a duke, and in 1704 he joined prince Eugene, with whom he fought the French and Bavarians at Blenheim, and obtained a complete victory, taking Marshal Tallard, and 26 other officers of rank, 121 standards, and 179 colours. In



1706 he fought the famous battle of Ramilies, in which his life was frequently in the most imminent danger. In 1709 Marlborough defeated Marshal Villars at Malplaquet; after his death, his remains were interred with great pomp in Westminster Abbey.

15. *All rounds itself off*, every part fits itself nicely into its place.

17. *Is an epic*, has the unity of action which is essential to, and characteristic of, an epic poem. "The epic poem treats of one great complex action, in a grand style, and with fulness of detail." (*Thomas Arnold*).

20. *That battle of Agincourt*, that is, Shakespeare's dramatic picture of the battle of Agincourt. This battle was fought between the French and English in 1415. Henry V., who fought against overwhelming odds, and gained a splendid victory.

21. *In its sort*, of its kind.

23. *Jaded*, worn out or exhausted; unfit through exhaustion for further action.

24. *Big with destiny*, which was to decide the fate of two nations; in which most momentous issues would be determined.

25. *Ye good yeomen, &c.* These words form part of the address of Henry V. to his army, *not* at the battle of Agincourt as Carlyle says, but at the siege of Harfleur: see *Henry V*, III, i, 25-6. *Whose limbs were made in England*, who were born in England of English fathers.

31. *Protrusive*, thrusting itself forward; forcing itself on our notice.

32. *A sound like the ring of steel*, a warlike sound like the ringing sound made by swords striking on armour.

33. *Had a right.....that*, would have fought like a good soldier if circumstances had required him to take up the sword.

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6. *Cramping circumstances*, circumstances which prevented the free play of his genius, or full expression of his ideas.

12. *An open human soul*, a human soul ready to receive impressions, or open to conviction.



16. *The Globe Playhouse*, the Globe Theatre, in London, built in 1594, situated near the spot still called Bankside. Shakespeare was himself proprietor; here some of his plays were first produced, and he himself performed in them. It was of a horse-shoe form, partly covered with thatch. After it was licensed, the thatch took fire, through the negligent discharge of a piece of ordnance, and the whole building was consumed in 1613.

23. *Disjecta membra*, scattered limbs or remains.

30. *Tophet*, Hell—the same as *Gehenna*: see p. 25, l. 2 and note.

30. *We are such stuff as dreams are made of*—a quotation from Shakespeare: the following is the passage (*Tempest*, IV, i):

“ Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.”

The inscription on Shakespeare's monument in Westminster Abbey is taken from the above passage. This monument, which is surmounted by a statue of the poet, was built in 1740, the expense being defrayed by performances given for the purpose at Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres. *Made of*. Observe that Shakespeare has “made on,” which in Elizabethan English, had the same meaning.

31. *Scroll*, inscription or writing—properly a roll of parchment or paper (O. Fr. *escrol*, *escroue*, a register-roll). *Westminster Abbey*, the most ancient public building in London. A church was built here, in London, on a small island by Sebert, King of the East Saxons, and dedicated to St. Peter. It was known as the *West minster* to distinguish it from St. Paul's, or the *East minster*;\* but the first Westminster Abbey

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\* *Minster* is an old English name for a church.



was erected by Edward the Confessor, 1049—1066. Henry III., in 1220, commenced the building of a chapel dedicated to the Virgin at the east end of the church. In 1245 he began to take down and re-build the church. He died in 1272. The building was afterwards carried on by successive abbots. Henry VII. took down Henry III.'s chapel to the Virgin, in order to make room for his own Lady chapel, which is now called Henry VII.'s chapel, a beautiful building, containing the tombs of many royal personages. The upper parts of the two western towers were added by Sir Christopher Wren. The beautiful octagonal chapter-house was built in 1250, and there the first Parliament met. In Poet's Corner, in the south-eastern transept, are tombs of many of the most eminent men connected with English literature, and in the cloisters are numerous interesting tombs. The interior length of the Abbey, including Henry III.'s chapel, is 511 feet; entire breadth, across the transepts; 203 feet; height of the roof, 102 feet; height of the western towers, 224 feet.

33. *Is of the depth of any seer*, has as deep a meaning as a saying of any seer.

34. *Musically*, in music or song (*i. e.*, in verse).

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1. *Catholicism*. The Christian Church calls itself the "Holy Catholic (*i. e.* Universal) Church;" but the name *Catholic* when used by itself means "*Roman Catholic*." In Dante's age, which preceded the Reformation, there was only one Catholic Church, namely, that which is now called the Roman Catholic Church for the sake of contradistinction.

3. *True Catholicism*, Catholicism properly so called; that is, Catholicism is freed from the corruptions which had crept into it in the course of the first fifteen centuries, after which, the Protestant Reformers wanted to remove.

9. *Without offence*, without wounding any one's religious feelings.

10. *Universal Psalm*, hymn of praise in which all men, no matter of what race or creed, can join.

12. *The still more sacred Psalms*, namely, the Psalms of David, in the Bible.



31. *An unconscious man, a man who was not conscious of his own great qualities, or of the mission on which he had been sent into the world.*

34. *Those internal splendours, namely, the splendors of Heaven. The allusion is to the story of Mahomed's Night-journey to Heaven :*

"Hodba, the son of Kaled said, that Hamman son of Jahia said, that Cottada had it from Anas the son of Malek the son of Sesa, that the prophet of God gave them a relation of his night-journey to heaven in these words: As I was within the inclosure of the Kaaba (or, as he sometimes told the story, as I lay upon a stone), behold one (Gabriel) came to me with another, and cut me open from the pit of the throat to the groin; this done, he took out my heart, and presently there was brought near me a golden basin full of the water of faith; and he washed my heart, stuffed it, and replaced it. Then was brought to me a white beast less than a mule, but larger than an ass. I mounted him, and Gabriel went with me till I came to the first heaven of the world, and when he knocked at the door, it was said to him, 'Who is there?' he answered, 'Gabriel;' and 'Who is with you?' he answered, 'Mohammed'; then it was asked, 'Has the apostle had his mission?' he replied, 'Yes;' whereupon the wish was uttered, 'May it be fortunate with him, he will now be very welcome;' and the door was opened, and behold, there was Adam. Upon this Gabriel said to me, 'This is your father Adam, greet him;' and I did so, and he returned the greeting, saying, 'May my best son and the best prophet be prosperous.' Then he went up with me to the second heaven, and as he knocked at the door a voice demanded, 'Who is there?,' When he had answered, 'Gabriel,' he was further asked, 'And who is with you?' to which he replied, 'Mohammed;' the voice again inquired, 'Has the apostle had his mission?' Upon his answering, 'Yes,' I again heard the words, 'May it be fortunate to him, he will now be very welcome;' and the door was opened, and behold there was Jahia (*i. e.*, John) and Isa (Jesus) and they were cousins-german.' Gabriel said to me, 'These are Jahia and Isa,' and I did so, and they greeting me in turn, said, 'May our best brother and the best prophet be successful.'" It would be nauseous to an English reader to repeat in the same manner, as my author does, the knocking at the doors, the same question and answer, and the exchange of greeting, through the following five heavens; it is sufficient to say that Mohammed being with Gabriel admitted into the third heaven, found Joseph there; Enoch in the fourth heaven, Aaron in the fifth, Moses in the sixth, and Abraham in the seventh; and that when he was near Moses, Moses wept, and being asked the reason of his weeping, said, "It was because a young man, whose mission was posterior to his, would have a greater number of his



nation enter into paradise, than he should of his countrymen." "Then," continued the prophet, "I was carried up to the tree Sedra, beyond which it is not lawful to go. The fruit thereof is as large as the water-pots of Hadjir and the leaves as big as the ears of an elephant. I saw there also four rivers, and when I asked Gabriel, 'What rivers are these?' he answered, 'Two of them run within paradise, and quite through it, the other two, which run on the outside of it, are the Nile and the Euphrates'. Then he took me to the house of visitation into which seventy-thousand angels go every day. Here there were set before me three vessels, one of wine, another of milk, and the third of honey. I drank of the milk, whereupon Gabriel said to me, 'This is the happiest [omen] for thee and thy nation.' " (Another tradition adds, "If you had chosen the wine, your nation would have strayed from the right way.") "Lastly, when I came to the throne of God, I was ordered to pray fifty times a day. In my return from thence, being near Moses, he asked me what I had been commanded to do; I told him to pray fifty times a day. 'And are you able,' said he, 'to pray fifty times a day?' and with an oath he declared, 'I have made the experiment among men, for I have endeavoured to bring the children of Israel to it, but never could compass it. Go back then to your Lord, and beg an abatement for your nation.' So I went back and he took off ten prayers; and coming to Moses, he advised me as before, and I went back again and had ten more abated; then coming to Moses, he repeated the same advice. I therefore returned, and was commanded to pray ten times a day; upon Moses's repeating what he had said before, I went back again, and was commanded to say prayers five times a day; and when Moses was informed of this last order, he would have had me go back again to my Lord and beg a still further abatement; I replied, 'I have so often petitioned my Lord that I am ashamed;' and so saying, I took my leave of him, and prayed for him."

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2. *Mahomet*, the founder of the religion of Islamism, born at Mecca about 570 A. D., belonged to the powerful tribe of Koreishites. At five years of age he lost his father, Abdallah, and was brought up by his uncle, Abu Taleb, Prince of Mecca, till the age of 14; then he joined a caravan, and went to make war on the Syrian frontier. Returning to Mecca, he there, at the age of 25, married Khadija, a rich widow. He was already remarkable for his mental ability, and regularity of conduct; but from his marriage to the age of 40 he led a life of piety and study, during which he matured the design of reforming the religion of his country, and, for that purpose, of establishing



the worship of one God, uniting in one worship all different religions which then divided Arabia—that is, idolatry, Sabaism, Judaism, and a corrupt form of Christianity. He commenced his mission in 610. He gave out that the angel Gabriel, having appeared to him, had dictated the truths which he was to reveal to men. After having converted his family, and some powerful friends, among whom were Ali, Abu-Beker, and Othman, all three afterwards Caliphs, he began his public teachings, declaring himself a prophet and the messenger of God. In Mecca he encountered a stern opposition, and in 622 was compelled to flee to Yatreb. This city gladly received him, and thence took the name of Medina (*Medinet al Nabi*, City of the Prophet). From this flight the Mahommedans date their era, which is hence called the Hegira (flight). Mahommed being persecuted, commanded his followers to employ arms for the propagation of the new religion. He himself subjugated many tribes of Arabia, and in 630 seized Mecca, the idols of which he destroyed. He was on the point of carrying his conquests into distant lands, when he died at Medina in 632, leaving that duty to his generals, the most celebrated of whom were Abu-Beker, Khaled, Omar, Amru. Abu-Beker succeeded him, with the title of Caliph (lieutenant). The dogmas and precepts of Islamism are found in the Koran. The chief dogmas are the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, the last judgment, and predestination. Fatalism was adopted by Mahommed into his system, to aid forward his conquests by inspiring a contempt for death. His precepts are circumcision, prayer, alms, ablutions, fasting—especially during the Ramadan—sacrifices on certain solemn occasions, and abstinence from wine and all fermented liquors. Polygamy is authorised by the Koran, but not more than four legitimate wives can be had at once. Respecting the history of Mahommed, Abul-Feda is the chief authority. Washington Irving has written a life of the Arabian prophet which is not equal to his best productions.

7. *Coil*, the ring or series of rings into which a rope or other like thing is wound; here, a tangled web.

8. *A questionable step*, an act of doubtful propriety.



10. *Speaker*, one sent by God into the world with a message to deliver to mankind.

11. *Charlatan*, a quack; a prating pretender. *Simulacrum*, image or semblance (without the substance or reality); "show" (p. 9, l. 13).

13. *Exhausted himself*, used up all his power; lost all his influence.

15. *Young*, in the vigour of youth; full of power or influence.

19. *Æschylus* (B. C. 525—556), a celebrated tragic poet of Athens. He was a soldier and fought in the battles of Marathon and Salamis. He wrote 90 tragedies, of which only 7 are extant, the chief being *Prometheus Vinc-tus*, *Septem contra Thebes* (Seven against Thebes), *Persæ*, and *Agamemnon*. He was accused of being a drunkard, and of never composing except in a state of intoxication. B. C. 525—556.

23. *Had been*, would have been.

31. *Koran*, or, *Alkoran* (Arabic *al*, the; and *koran*, reading, or a book), the name of the volume containing the revelations, doctrines, and precepts of Mahommed, in which his followers place implicit confidence. The general aim of the Alkoran was to unite the professors of the three different religions then followed in Arabia—idolaters, Jews, and Christians, in the knowledge and worship of one God, under the sanction of certain laws, and by the use of ceremonies, partly of ancient, and partly of novel institution, enforced by the consideration of rewards and punishments, both temporal and eternal, and to bring all to the obedience of Mahomet, as the prophet and ambassador of God, who was to establish the true religion on earth.

32. *Polix*, drawn out to a great length; tedious.

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2. *The inarticulate deeps*, the innermost recesses of the heart, the feelings of which cannot express themselves in words.

5. *The Earl of Southampton*, Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton (1573—1624), an English statesman. He served under Essex at Cadiz and in Ireland, and took part



with him in the insurrectionary proceedings in London, for which he was sentenced to death, but Queen Elizabeth remitted the sentence. He then interested himself with Sir Walter Raleigh, Calvert (afterwards Lord Baltimore), and Lord Arundel, in colonizing America, and was Chairman of the London Company of Virginia. In parliament he was a firm supporter of liberty, and was, probably for that reason, committed to prison by James I., on charges which appear to have had no foundation, for he was shortly afterwards released. He afterwards went to the Netherlands, to fight for Dutch independence, but he and his son were attacked with fever, the latter dying. The Earl was sufficiently recovered to attempt to bring his son's body to England, but died on the way. He was one of the early friends of Shakespeare. He is one of those who have been identified with the "W. H." to whom Shakespeare dedicated his Sonnets. See note on p. 38, l. 31.

6. *Cast some kind glances on*, looked with some little favour on.

7. *Was for sending*, wanted to send.

8. *Treadmill*, a wheel similar in principle to an over-shot water-wheel, but having *tread-boards*, of considerable length, upon its circumference, to allow of sufficient standing room for a row of from ten to twenty persons, by whose weight, successively treading the boards, the wheel is moved round. It was invented by the Chinese, and used for raising water to irrigate their fields. It has been introduced into some of the prisons of England, for the exercise of criminals condemned to hard labour.

9. *Odin*, the chief god of Northern Mythology. According to the Sagas, Odin and his brothers, Vile and Ve, the sons of *Boer*, or the first-born, slew Ymer or Chaos, and from his body created the world, converting his flesh into dry land; his blood, which at first occasioned a flood, into the sea; his bones into mountains; his skull into the vault of heaven; and his brows into the spot known as *Midgard*, the middle part of the earth, intended for the habitation of the sons of men. Odin, as the highest of the gods, the *Alfader*, rules heaven and earth, and is omniscient. As ruler of heaven, his seat is Valaskjalf, from whence his



two black ravens, Huginn (Thought) and Muninn (Memory), fly daily forth to gather tidings of all that is being done throughout the world. As god of war, he holds his court in Valhalla, whither come all brave warriors after death to revel in the tumultuous joys in which they took most pleasure while on earth. His greatest treasures are his eight-footed steed Sleifner, his spear Gungner, and his ring Draupner. As the concentration and source of all greatness, excellence, and activity, Odin bears numerous different names. By drinking from Mimir's fountains, he became the wisest of gods and men, but he purchased the distinction at the cost of one eye. He is the greatest of sorcerers, and imparts a knowledge of his wondrous arts to his favourites. Frigga is his queen, and the mother of Baldur, the Scandinavian Apollo; but he has other wives and favourites, and a numerous progeny of sons and daughters. Although the worship of Odin extended over all the Scandinavian lands, it found its most zealous followers in Denmark, where he still rides abroad as the Wild Huntsman, rushing over land and water in the storm-beaten skies of winter.

18. *The grandest thing we have yet done*, the most splendid production of England up to the present time.

28. *Indian empire or no Indian empire*, whether we keep or lose our Indian empire.

33. *Apart from spiritualities*, leaving out of account the great intellectual and moral influence of Shakespeare's writings.

34. *Marketable*, capable of having its value estimated; practically useful.

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4. *Saxondom*, region occupied by people of Saxon origin. The word is formed in imitation of *Christendom*, *Heathendom*, &c.

15. *Fantastic*, extravagantly fanciful; visionary.

25. *Paramatta*, a town of New South Wales, Australia.

26. *Parish-Constable*, the chief police officer of a parish—playfully used here for "Governor," or "Ruler."



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2. *Poor Italy.* When Carlyle was writing, the different states of Italy had not been united into one kingdom, which it now is.

4. *Protocol,* the minutes or rough draft of a treaty, despatch or other document.

7. *Cossacks,* military tribes guarding the Southern and Eastern frontiers of the Russian Empire. They are very skilful as horsemen.





## APPENDIX.

### Etymological Notes.

*Absurd* (Lat. *ab*, intensive; *surdus*, deaf and dumb), proceeding from a deaf-mute; hence, sounding harsh or offensive to the ear (or, resembling a reply such as is given by a deaf man to a question he has not heard distinctly); incongruous.

*Ambition* (Lat. *ambitio*, a going about). In Rome it was customary for those who sought office to go about canvassing for votes; hence the word came to mean an inordinate love of influence and power.

*Arena*, literally a sanded place (Lat. *arena*, sand). It was the name given by the Romans to that part of an amphitheatre where the gladiators fought, which was strewed with red sand to conceal from the view of the spectators any blood which might be spilt.

*Balance*, M. E. *balance*, Fr. *balance*, "a balance, pair of weights or balances;" of Italian *bilancia*, Lat. *bilancem*, accusative of *bilanxa*, having two scales—from Lat. *bi*, *bis*, double, *lanxa*, a dish or plate of a balance.

*Battle* was not restricted to the hostile shock of armies, as it is now; but was often used of the army itself; or sometimes in a more special sense, of the main body of the army, as distinguished from the van and rear; as, "Each *battle* sees the other's umbered face."—Shakespeare's *Henry V.*, IV, Chorus.

*Boor* (a rough unmannerly fellow), a tiller of the soil; from the Dutch *boauen*, to till. In South Africa, a farmer is called a *boer*.

*Brother*, cognate with Lat. *frater* "one who bears or supports," is from the verb *bear*, cognate with Lat. *fero*. The Sanskrit *bhratri* is from *bhri*, to support or maintain, originally, to bear.

*Calculate* (Lat. *calculi*, pebbles). The Romans used to teach their children by means of the *abacus*, the round balls used in which were called *calculi* from their resemblance to pebbles.

*Chaos*, from Gr. *chaos*, infinite space, from *chainein*, to yawn or gape; hence the confused mass in which matter existed before the universe was created.

*Character*, Gr. *charakter*, a mark, from *charassein*, to engrave a mark used to express or represent a sound; also a distinguishing mark of quality.



*Chivalry*, (Fr. *cheval*, a horse), the order or system of knighthood, knights being always horsemen; hence, also valour, generosity, and other qualities becoming knights. "It is a striking evidence of the extent to which in the feudal times the men-at-arms, the mounted knights, were esteemed as *the* army, while the footmen were regarded as little better than a supernumerary rabble—another record of this contempt probably surviving in the word 'infantry,'—that 'chivalry,' which of course is but a different form of 'cavalry,' could once be used as convertible with *army*. It needed more than one Agincourt to teach that this was so no longer.

*Court* originally meant a coop or sheep-fold. It was on the Latium hills that the ancient Latins raised their *cors* or *cohors*, small enclosures with hurdles for sheep, &c. Subsequently, as many men as could be cooped or folded together were called a *corps* or *cohort*. The *cors* or cattleyard, being the nucleus of the farm, became the centre of a lot of farm cottages, then of a hamlet, town, fortified place, and lastly of a royal residence.

*Deliberate*, carefully weighed and considered (Low Lat. *deliberatus*, p. p. of *deliberare*, to consult. Lat. *de*, thoroughly; *librare*, to weigh, from *libra*, a balance).

*Diplomacy*, the tact, negotiations, privileges, &c., of a diplomatist, or diplomat, i.e., one who carries a diploma to a foreign court to authorise him to represent the government which sends him out.

*Dunce*, a dolt; a stupid person. The word is taken from Duns Scotus, the learned schoolman. His followers were called *dunsters*. Tyndal says, when they saw that their hair-splitting divinity was giving way to modern theology, "the whole barking curs raged in every pulpit" against the classics and new notions, so that the name indicated an opponent to progress, to learning, and hence a dunce.

*Earth*. (A. S. *erian*, to plough), that which is ploughed. Cf. Lat. *aro*, I plough.

*Every*, O. E. *æver-elc*=*ever-each*. "*Every each*" found in the sixteenth century, as in Burton's "*Anatomy of Melancholy*," is a pleonasm arising from a forgetfulness of the origin of *every*.

*Fancy* is an abbreviation of Mid. Eng. *fantasie*; Old Fr. *fantasie*; Low Lat. *phantasia*; Gr. *phantasia*, a making visible (hence, imagination). Gr. *phantazem*, to display—from *phainomai*, to see.

*Foreign*, a corruption of Mid. Eng. *foreine*; Low Lat. *foraneus* (Lat. *foras*, out of doors). The *g* has intruded in the word.



*Genius* is literally the creative faculty (Lat. *gignere*, to beget or produce). It is usually explained as the "inborn faculty," or birth-wit. *Genius*, a kind of fairy, is a corruption of the Arabic *jinn*, by confusion with the Lat. *genius*, an attendant or tutelary spirit.

*Humour, Humorous.* Many words preserve the record of exploded errors, which, though rejected by the growing intelligence of mankind, may yet survive in language. Thus the expressions "good humour," "bad humour," etc., rest on a now exploded, but once widely prevalent, theory of medicine, according to which there were four principal moistures or "humours" in a man's body, on the due proportion and proper combination of which the disposition alike of body and of mind depended. The word *temper*, too, as now used, has its origin in the same theory, for the due admixture or proper "tempering" of these humours produced what was called the happy "temper," which, existing inwardly, manifested itself in the outward behaviour. *Distemper*, therefore, a word which we still employ in the sense of "sickness," denoted that evil frame, either of body or mind, which had its origin in an unsuitable mixture of the four humours. Compare the words *melancholy, sanguine, &c.*

*Influence*, originally the supposed directing power of the planets over man. Whenever the word "influence" occurs in the earlier poets there is always some allusion to the planetary powers supposed to be exercised by the heavenly bodies over men. Lat. *in*, into; *fluo*, I flow—a flowing in from the stars; power or authority.

*Intellect* (Lat. *inter*, between; *legere*, to choose) literally the power of choosing or discerning; discernment.

*Libel* literally means a *little book* (Lat. *libellus*), and was originally applied to a plaintiff's statement of his case, which usually "defames" the defendant; hence, a defamatory writing.

*Lord* is a softened contraction of A. S. *hlaford*, a lord, probably from *hlafweard*, loaf-ward or loaf-keeper. Brewer derives the word from *hlaf-ord*, loaf-author, or bread earner. Verstegan suggests *hlaf-ford*, loaf-giver.

*Monster* (Lat. *monstrare*, to point), anything pointed out as out of the common order of nature; anything or person uncommonly large; deformed; cruel, &c.

*Nefarious*, (Lat. *nefas*, unlawful, impious, from *ne*, not; and *fas*, law) wicked in the extreme; detestably vile.

*Neighbour* (A. S. *neah*, near; *gebur*, a peasant or dweller), a "nigh-boor," i. e., a near-dweller. In the Bible, the word is used also in the sense "fellow-being."



*Ostler* (*hosteller*), was originally the keeper of a *hostel* or place for the entertainment of travellers, from Lat. *hospes hospites*, a guest. The word now means an inn-servant having care of the horses.

*Pagan* properly means belonging to a village (Lat. *pagus*). The Christian church fixed itself first in cities, the centres of intelligence, and thence gradually spread to the village where idolatry prevailed for a long time.

*Pontiff*, from the Lat. *pontifex*, a name given by the ancient Romans to a high priest, from *pons*, a bridge, and *facio* make; because the first bridge over the Tiber was constructed by the Roman chief priest. Milton uses the adjectival form of the word in the literal sense: "By wondrous art pontifical."

*Province* means a country previously conquered (Latin *provincia*).

*Rhyme*, O. E. *rîm*, rime=a number. The *h* was inserted from false analogy with *rhythm*, which is from Gr. *rhythmos*, measured motion; from *rheein*, to flow.

*Share*—from A. S., *sciran*, to cut—literally, a portion cut off. *Shire*, *share*, *sheer*, *shears*, are all cognate words.

*Sincere* properly means *without wax* (Lat. *sine cera*). The allusion is either to the custom of concealing flaws in pottery with wax, or to honey, unmixed with wax.

*Soldier* (Lat. *solidus*, a shilling) originally meant a hireling or mercenary, who received a *solidus* for his services. The word has now acquired a very different meaning.

*Splenetic* (from *spleen*, a spongy discus near the large extremity of the stomach; fretful; peevish; gloomy. The spleen was supposed to be the seat of anger.

*Talent*, natural gifts or intelligence meant a certain weight of gold or silver, i.e., a sum of money (Gr. *talenton*). The English use of the word had its origin in the Parable of the Talents, in the Bible. *Matthew XXV*, 14-30.

*Tragedy*, Fr. *tragedie*, Lat. *tragœdia*, Gr. *tragodia*, a tragedy; literally a goat-song; probably because a goat (as the spoiler of the vines. Gr. *tragos*, a he-goat), was awarded as a prize.

*Upholsterer* is lengthened from *upholster*, put for *upholdster* another form of *upholder*, one who holds up to sale, formerly used of a dealer in furniture.





